

THE LIFE WORTH LIVING



HERBERT MORTIMER GESNER

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THE LIFE WORTH LIVING

The Life Worth Living

OR THE RELIGION OF CHRIST

*A Systematic and Popular Exposition of the Greatest
Religious Document the World has ever
seen, Commonly Known as the Ser-
mon on the Mount*

By

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of Atlantic City, N. J.*



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PREFACE

This book, born in fear and trembling and brought forth with much travail of spirit, is now sent out into the world. My one aim and one desire has been to know the "Mind of the Master" and to exhibit the Religion of Jesus as he taught it.

"As much as in me lieth" I have sought to free myself from all theological bias and all trend of training, that I might see "Jesus only" and that I might hear the teachings which he taught.

While in this book it is "I who speak and not the Lord," yet I say humbly, though confidently, that "I think also that I have the Spirit of God."

My chief hope is, that those into whose hands this book may come, and those who may peruse its pages, seeking for an answer to that question which confronts every thoughtful, serious man, "What is the life worth living?" and desiring to know what was the "Religion that Jesus Taught" may find in this exposition of his own words something that shall help them in their quest.

May he who reads experience the joy and comfort of spirit, which he who wrote received, at

every moment, from the first contemplation of the plan to its present imperfect completion.

While I, like every man, am greatly indebted to helps many and to teachers many, whose names cannot be here expressly acknowledged, I wish to recognize my particular indebtedness to the Rev. Henry W. Maier of New Britain, Conn., who has colabored with me, in forming the general outline of most of the chapters of this book, and to whom I am largely obligated for many valuable suggestions.

FOREWORD

How well the artist understands the value of the view-point! None better than he knows its importance in the painting and interpreting of pictures. If he can lead the observer to that place, point or motive, from which he looks out upon that subject he seeks to portray, he has done much to quicken the sympathy, assist the understanding, and aid the mind to the right use of the picture.

This value of the view-point has suggested to me, that a brief word, explanatory of how I was led to the study of the subject myself, and introductory to the chapters which follow, may be of practical use to the reader.

If I can get you clearly to understand the motive, the purpose, the quest, which spurred and inspired me in my study of this subject, I shall, in thought, have brought you to my view-point, and thus will you be enabled better to sympathize with, appreciate, and understand what I have attempted to accomplish in these pages.

While it is often difficult to state the origin of an idea, I believe I can safely say that two influences coöperated to give birth to this book.

The first was those passages in the Gospel biographies of our Lord, which speak of his preaching, and of his teaching the disciples and the people, where no mention whatever is made of what he said. These passages are not a few.

Among the many recorded, we read such as the following: "And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee," "And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of a boat," "And he spake to them of the kingdom of God," "And he was teaching daily in the temple"; and concerning his disciples, it is recorded: "And he sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick." The question arose in my mind, What did he preach? What did he teach? What was his system, if he had any?

For a long time these queries had lain latent in my mind, until, in my course of reading, this quotation from Lessing, "The Christian Religion has been tried for eighteen centuries and the Religion of Christ remains to be tried," again brought the question squarely before my view, and again I asked, Where is the Religion of Christ found? Where any clear setting forth of what he was wont to preach, of what he taught his disciples to teach? Where in best and briefest form is his exhibition of those principles of the Kingdom of God and of heaven, which he

would have promulgated and prevail upon the earth? and that question I sought to answer.

It was plain to me that the religious system of Christ was not given in the miracles, nor in the parables, nor in the incidents of his interesting life; these are merely illustrations and expressions of principles and beliefs already established and are themselves without coördination or systematic relation. Then the thought came to me that there was one place and only one in the Gospel record, where a complete sermon, an entire discourse, a systematic and related body of teaching was given; to wit, in the Sermon on the Mount.

The more I studied the matter the more I became convinced that this was the truth, that the Sermon on the Mount is the heart and soul of the Gospel, is the Gospel, and that miracle, parable and occasional saying, in short, the life, are but expressive and illustrative of what is taught in that greatest, briefest system of religion the world has ever known.

I dare not be so bold as to say that all that Jesus taught concerning the Kingdom of God is contained in this great sermon, but all that he taught is hinted at, suggested in principle, foreshadowed in these marvelous words, even as every commandment and every law of God is contained in the great law of Love. With little doubt this

Mountain Sermon is the fruit of those long years of patient waiting, keen observation, divine meditation, and heavenly communion, before our Lord entered upon his public ministry.

This, we believe, will be the final conclusion of the deep and thoughtful student of this remarkable discourse.

It is characterized by those elements of excellence which a sensitive and appreciative student will recognize and must admire in written or spoken discourse, and which come only as the result of years of painstaking labor.

There is in this sermon that sweet simplicity, that lucidity, plainness, and beauty of utterance which bespeak care.

The one who will follow this discourse faithfully will discover that Christ here gives an articulated body of principles and not merely *disjecta membra* of precept and saying. This is a body of truth, a system of thought, a coördinated setting forth of the true religion; part is related to part, teaching to teaching, with logical coherence and rational sequence; and the whole bears to the one end — the Kingdom of God.

But, above all, the reader is impressed with its practical character. It deals with life — every theme is a theme of life; and every principle is applicable to man as long as man is man.

In short, I believe in this marvelous teaching he who seeks will find the desideratum of the heart, mind and spirit of every man — a sound Philosophy for life, a spiritual Ethic and a practical Religion.

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THE LIFE WORTH LIVING

The Life Worth Living

CHAPTER I

THE CHARACTER WORTH HAVING

Matt. v, 1-12

THAT part of the Gospel, containing the address which Jesus delivered in the Mount, before the multitudes and his disciples, and recorded in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew, has commonly been called the "Sermon on the Mount." While this title has the advantage of being convenient, attractive and familiar, it is by no means adequate, as a definition or classification of that remarkable discourse. Says Austin Phelps,¹ "The generic idea of a sermon is that of an oral address to the popular mind on religious truth contained in the Scriptures, and elaborately treated with a view to persuasion." Now while this discourse of Christ may be made to tally with this definition almost in detail, and we have our suspicion that the definition was made from a study of this very passage, yet this is the

¹ "The Theory of Preaching." A Phelps, p. 28.

definition of a scholar, the product of an analytic mind, and by no means tallies with the popular idea of a sermon.

The popular conception of a sermon, we apprehend, is more nearly contained in the definition which the Standard Dictionary gives. "A discourse by a clergyman upon some religious topic based on a passage or text of the Bible, and delivered as part of a church service." We believe that this expresses the average idea of a sermon, and it is a term far too small to comprehend the bounds of this exhaustive discourse. I know, for myself, that the conception of this product of the Divine Teacher, as a sermon, has *limited* its idea in my mind, and has *lessened* its place and purpose, in the Gospel record. And this is the very result we would seek to avoid. Viewed from the standpoint of God's government of a world of moral and spiritual beings, it should more properly be denominated the setting forth of the Constitution and Statutes of that moral and spiritual system which Jesus so often referred to as "The Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven." Viewed from the standpoint of man as a religious being, dependent upon and guided by a revelation of the Divine, it is an analytic and systematic setting forth of the Gospel which Jesus preached, a related exhibition of the Religion of Christ. It

contains the foundation stones upon which the life shall be built, the mountain principles to which the spirit of man shall aspire! It is the center and soul of the Mind of the Master — it is the creed of the Christ; to it all preaching of prophets of the earlier time, all the laws of the Jewish nation, all the experiences of Israel's history, converge; and from it radiate all incidents and events written in the Gospel story, all epistles, preaching and Acts of the apostles. Therefore it seems to me that we must have an absolutely larger conception, of this "Great Discourse" of the Christ in our minds, that it may assume its proper place in our system of thinking, and have its proper influence in our way of life. And we believe that a proper study of its content and meaning must result in a larger conception of the discourse itself.

When Jesus declared himself as a prophet and teacher sent from God, when he came upon the heels of John's proclamation, "behold the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and declared himself to be the exponent and head of this kingdom, men asked questions as they are asking them to-day.

He came as a Teacher of religious truth, and men asked, Wherein does the authority of this teacher differ from others, and wherein is his teaching parallel to or diverse from theirs?

The answers to these questions are given to those who will diligently study even as much of his teaching as is contained in this discourse.

He came as a Leader of the lives of men, and asked that those who heard him, follow in his way of life, and men naturally ask, What does he require of those who follow him, and what does he promise and offer in return for such following? The answers to these questions are found in that Way of Life, with its obligations and rewards, as set forth in this discourse.

He came as the Lawgiver, the Enunciator of new spiritual principles of living, the Founder of a new kingdom, and men asked, What are the laws and principles of this new kingdom, and how is one to become a citizen of this new realm? These questions likewise receive their answers in his present discourse, and answering the last question first he at once turns the thoughts of his hearers to the subject of the Citizens of the kingdom of Heaven, and sets before them the Character Worth Having.

It strikes the student of this Constitution of the Kingdom of God, the learner of what the Religion of Christ is, as strange, that the Master should have sounded so high a note at the very beginning of his discourse. It seems as though he had begun at the very climax of his teaching —

and that the very perfection of attainment required of the disciples of this Teacher is such as, at the outset, would discourage all following. But Jesus puts character, such a character as he here outlines, first in his system of teaching, because it is to be first in the lives of his followers, and it is concerning life — real life — true life, abundant life, lasting life, satisfying life — that he is speaking throughout. Here is one point wherein his teaching differs from all those who have gone before and all those who shall come after.

The Teacher puts character first, in this discourse, that he may make it prominent by contrast. It is not knowledge, nor attainment, nor utterance, nor action that must have the prominent place in the Religion of Christ, but character. He puts character first because of its indispensableness to the system which he taught. Given the character, the elements of which are enumerated in these opening words, and the man is a citizen of the kingdom; but those who have all else — all outward semblance and conformity to the ideal law, yet lack the inner character — cannot be counted as citizens of the kingdom. He puts this ideal character first because the inner man and the spiritual life is of the very essence of the Religion of Christ, all else is subservient to this, and de-

signed for the production of such a manhood. He puts it first because upon this is built the Government of God, and the religion of the spiritual life.

Now if one should run over the opening words of Christ's discourse, and inquire what is the prominent feature, what is that mark which appears in every verse of the twelve and characterizes and distinguishes the whole, surely the least observant cannot remain long in doubt. As when some skilled player takes a simple theme, some sweet melody, and with the technique and touch of the artist weaves it into the warp and woof of his beautiful harmony, so that the theme now appears clear and true and again is lost in the very richness of its setting, yet under all and through all it is present, giving character and meaning to the entire composition, so does the Divine musician in this instance. His opening words sound that theme of "Blessed," which threads its golden way to the very end of the passage — concluding with that burst of music, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad."

The motif of this part of the discourse is plainly "blessedness," joy and gladness. This note of joy, this song of heavenly happiness, reminds us of the guiding song of the woodland bird in Wagner's Siegfried, leading the brave soul,

on and up, "o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent until the night is gone"—and his quest is attained.

How helpful and how appropriate that our Divine Leader should have begun his Gospel with this note of encouragement, this song of blessed attainment for his timid human followers! How the giving of this second law, the law of love, contrasts with the giving of the first law, "the fiery law," when the mountain smoked and men dared not draw nigh! How beautiful in its simplicity was the giving of this new law of life, "And when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him!"

Yea truly, "the Blessed Life" is the theme of these verses, and that those who have the qualities of character here enumerated shall be blessed, is the opening thought. Lyman Abbott in an article in *The Outlook*, has given such a true definition and such an apposite illustration of blessedness, that we cannot refrain from here quoting his words. "There are three kinds of happiness: pleasure, joy, blessedness. Pleasure is the happiness of the animal nature; joy, of the social nature; blessedness of the spiritual nature. Pleasure we share with the animals, joy with one another, blessedness with God."

A boy comes home at Christmas from college. At the close of the Christmas dinner he says,

“Mother, I haven’t had as good a dinner as this since I was home at Thanksgiving.” That is pleasure.

Friends come in; there are games, dancing, quiet talks in nooks and corners; in brief, a good time. That is joy.

By and by the friends depart, the children go to their rooms, the father closes the house, the mother sits meditatively by the dying embers of the fire, living over the birth, the childhood, the early youth of her boy, and looking forward with a mother’s hope to his future, and as her husband comes to remind her that it is time to retire, she draws a sigh of quiet joy, and says, as she reaches out to take his hand, “John, we are certainly blest in our children!” That is blessedness. Such a blessedness, deep, sweet, spiritual, eternal, is held out in the opening words of Christ’s discourse to those who will dare to walk after him, and to attain to that heavenly character which he here portrays.

Observe that these are the many qualities of one character, and not the separate qualities of many characters. He is not describing the classes of the kingdom, but the perfect harmony and balance of each citizen of the kingdom. Patience, lowliness, spiritual aspiration, kindliness, purity, peaceableness, a willingness to serve and

to suffer in that service, are to dwell together as happy brethren in the one house of character. These are the heights of the soul — the mountain peaks to be attained. There is not one quality here enumerated that is not hard to learn, difficult to attain. He who climbs to these altitudes must have purpose and resolve. Such a purpose and resolve as can only be maintained while he hears that voice of Blessedness singing him on his upward way.

Who but the most impracticable, ignorant and unobservant of men could ever think that these were to be attained at a bound? Meekness, patience, kindliness, suffering — do they not speak of years for their completion? Do they not drop with the sweat of the labor of attainment? These are the octave of the heavenly scale of music; he who can sound these notes in right relation shall go through the world making the harmonies of heaven.

These are the colors, which form the spectrum of the heavenly light; combined in their due proportion they make that pure light which Jesus bids us to let shine. All the beauty of holiness is from the right and skillful use of these divine colors.

We see again, that the striking mark which differentiates and characterizes the citizens of

Christ's Kingdom, is determined not by the extraneous and the adventitious, not by the chance or fortune of birth — but by what you may, under the divine help, attain for yourself.

In the kingdoms of this world, in the nations of the earth, citizenship is determined largely by birth.

In the XIV Amendment to our Constitution it is written, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." Other countries have statutes which are substantially the same; — but in the kingdom of heaven citizenship is not determined by where you are, but by what you are. All nations, tribes, colors, and races of men are eligible to this citizenship. It is the universal Kingdom. Jesus was a Jew, but he was free from that narrowness of nationalism which circumscribed the ancient Israelites.

Nor is this citizenship determined by "who you are." Whole nations have held to the tradition that a man's place in the world, his work and privileges, his life, in short, is settled by his origin or the chance circumstances of his environment. In India, a man's caste, carrying with it privileges, opportunities, obligations and promises, is determined by custom and condition wholly with-

out the choice of the man himself. In the kingdom of heaven this is not so — the conditions of this citizenship are within the power of the individual's own choice — and its blessings are open to all. The "what you are," the character of the man, is the one sole and unchangeable condition of citizenship. The emphasis of Christ's teaching is, ever is, throughout this entire discourse laid on character. "Being" is its great theme; "to become" its great endeavor. And is not the Master, philosophically and practically, wise in giving character the place he does in life? As man is the highest creature in God's creation, so character is the highest level in man. Character is the man. The thing to be supremely sought in life is not knowledge, for the man of knowledge who lacks character is a more dangerous citizen in any community because of his knowledge. Here ignorance is preferable to knowledge. Nor is power or place the thing to be supremely desired; for the man of power who lacks character is a greater menace to civilization by the very possession of power.

The man of wealth and of talent does not by the possession of these enrich the community in which he lives, if, while owning these, he still lacks that character which makes the possession of these safe and helpful. The city, town or

State is not the richer but the poorer for having him within her midst. But given a character, such as is here pictured in Christ's words, and power, knowledge, talent and possession is safe in his keeping and a real enrichment of life.

Here we find the root thought from which grows that wise, beautiful rule Christ later gives—"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness,"—then the world itself is safe in your keeping. Christ ever viewed life in its broadest aspect, ever regarded and spoke of man at his highest level. How this teaching contrasts with the wisdom of men and the aims of humanity! The true man is the spiritual man; the rich man is the spiritual man; the strong man is the spiritual man; the citizen of the heavenly kingdom is the man of the heavenly character.

Again, do we not find markedly emphasized in this Character to which Christ draws our attention, what are commonly called the passive elements? Lowliness, meekness, patience, kindness, peaceableness, suffering, these are all passive, rather than active, qualities. The man of the Kingdom seems to be determined not so much by what he is able to do as by what he is able to bear.

Says F. W. Robertson, "Before Christ came, the heathen had counted for divine the legislative wisdom of man—manly strength, manly truth,

manly justice, manly courage. The life and the Cross of Christ shed a splendor from heaven upon a new and until then unheard-of order of heroism — that which may be called the feminine order.”

The next great principle of living which this opening passage seems rightly to contain is this: Those who follow the way of life, laid down in this discourse shall have this character. Character is not attained at a bound, it does not leap forth from the life of the man, full grown, as did Athene from the head of Zeus. This condition of character cannot be too much emphasized. There have been dreamers, enthusiasts, idealists, in every age, who have thought that the man can be made or remade in a moment. As the earth was at the beginning without form and void and yet in that elemental substance there were the possibilities of form, order, beauty and perfection, to be called out and developed in the course of the ages, so a truer study of man teaches us that while within the primitive man, considered individually or collectively, there is the possibility of moral and spiritual order, power and perfection, yet these qualities are developed and called out only after long courses of training and contact with the things of life. He who thinks otherwise has not rightly interpreted God's way in the earth, nor His way in the world of men. “One

day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," and the element of time is necessary in the development of such a perfection of character as is revealed in these words of the Christ. Adam did not begin a man of character — nor does a boy begin with a character, but each of them begins his career with the *capabilities* of a character.

In the presence of these words of Christ, we stand before the Alplike altitudes of manhood — and it means a climb for their attainment; in these words a course is set before us, and it bespeaks a training; here is pictured a character, a heavenly character, and it means living.

Alas, for that one who dreams that mere resolve, or that a single act of will, gives such a character.

Moreover, it seems to me that even a little thought upon this curriculum which Christ here sets down for those who are to be learners at his feet will teach us that this character is to be attained through doing, living, Action. How does the child learn anything, in this present scheme of things which we have called the world? How does he learn walking, talking, the use of his powers material and immaterial? Is it not by doing? How does the artist attain to his accuracy of eye and skill of hand? Is it not by

practice? How does the musician become the interpreter of the soul through the media of sound? Is it not by practice? And does it not tell of years of trying, of doing? And a manhood such as this here depicted speaks to us of years and tears and failures and successes and life. Sleeping on a dictionary will not give a man the knowledge of the words it contains. Reading the Bible and living on your knees will never make "a man of Christ." The religion of the Master is eminently practical, and the one who learns this way, must be up and doing.

Moreover, there is a universal law underlying the terms and conditions which the Master here prescribes for his pupils. The result of action, good or bad, is reaction. The result of living, is being. This is to interpret life from its inner side. The modern psychology has strengthened and illustrated this truth of Christ. The physical world acts upon the man within; the psychical world reacts at the touch of this stimulus; and through this action and reaction there comes the change in the nerve, the brain, the soul itself, the man is built up or the man is broken down, made or destroyed according to this law. A wrong method of life gives a wrong character — a right method of living gives a resultant rightness of being. Not that this is the whole of the

truth, but this is one important phase of the truth — the one upon which our minds are resting at this present moment. While it is true that environment makes the man, it is likewise true that man makes the environment, but it is to this first limb of the twofold principle that our thought is here directed.

Therefore and always, religion must have law, principle, precept and command — and rightly is a true religion denominated “a way of Life.” The great end of “the living,” “the doing,” is not for the deeds in themselves, but for the sake of the being and of the character of the man which is thus developed. How far man has gone astray in this very region! Prayer is not for prayer’s sake — nor sacrifices for sacrifices’ sake — nor form for form’s sake, but all for man’s sake, and through him for God’s sake — and what God most desires is the right development of His children. The purpose of Christ’s teaching is to make men; men like those having the manhood portrayed in this picture. Men who in their relations to God are dependent, humble, submissive and receptive; men who in their relation to their fellows are patient, kind and serviceful, for even in these qualities of character the Master gives us a foreshadowing of the bifurcated law of love, to which he later calls explicit attention. Men

who realize, through living the life, the "Blessedness" which comes alone from being.

To return to our point of starting — these texts tell us that those who attain this character have that character which is worth possessing. This is true because of the fruits borne of such a character; these are denominated collectively as "Blessedness." A man cannot be a man like this and not be blessed. In spite of the vain speculations of the philosophers, in spite of the learned disquisitions of the men of Ethic — our Teacher says here, most plainly, that goodness and gladness cannot be separated; righteousness and blessedness cannot be divorced, God hath married them at the beginning, and what He hath joined together no man can put asunder.

When the practical man of this world inquires, "What things are worth doing?" the Master answers him, briefly and completely, "those things which result in such a being." These are worth while, because of the Divine approval — "The Beatitudes," as they are called, begin and end with "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Christ himself is the Teacher and the pattern for just such a character. These qualities were possessed and exemplified in his way of life. These are the ways of pleasantness and these are the paths of peace. These are the texts, if you

will, of sermons which Jesus is to preach to his disciples, in his life, the outlines of which are given on this occasion. These are the subjects upon which the Teacher is about to instruct his scholars, and the motto written in letters of gold across the wall of the schoolroom, that the earnest scholar may ever have it in mind, is this: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye DO them."

In the school of Christ, as in the school of this practical world, the guiding star must be, "*Esse quam videre.*"

CHAPTER II

LIVE A USEFUL LIFE

Matt. v, 13-16

IN his opening words Christ has told his followers *what* they are to be — he now turns to the thought of *why* they are to be. As he has placed before them their relation and obligation to the God who is above them, he now puts before them their relation and obligation to the world which is about them. Unselfishness is slain with a single stroke; the purpose in living is established in a sentence. If “to be” is the end of a man for himself, if character is the great object of individual human existence, then it follows, logically, that character is developed only in doing; character is expressed only in action. The solidarity of the race, the brotherhood of man, the obligation of service, is established at the outset.

As we study the story of creation we see that everything in the earth exists for the sake of something else, as well as for itself. The vegetable kingdom rests on, and is possible only because of, the mineral; the animal depends upon

the vegetable, the human is related to them all. We are debtors to every realm of creation, and man bears a relation to his fellows. As we view the world of nature from the standpoint of modern science we find this truth emphasized — the interrelation and interdependence of every part of this great scheme of material things with every other part.

Recently I asked a professor of astronomy in one of our large colleges whether he did not think it probable that in this infinite universe other spheres than ours were inhabited. He answered: "Of course it may be so, but when I consider how many causes, forces, factors, must unite for the balance, adjustment and preservation of this world, I can easily conceive that it might be that the solar system with its millions of stars, with its planets and its heavenly bodies, exists for the sake of this world alone."

As we come more and more to the conviction of the interdependence and interrelation of great and small, for the production of an ordered, stupendous whole, in the world physical, so Scripture teaches us that before all, back of all, sustaining all, operating in and through all, is God. As science teaches us that nothing in the world exists for its own sake, so Scripture teaches us that God does not, cannot, live a selfish, uncom-

municative, useless life.

Therefore how eminently in accord with the nature of things, how preëminently proper, is this teaching of Christ, that man who partakes of God's nature and is made in His image should live for a purpose, and must have something to do for other than self in this present world? — in other words, he must live a useful life.

If one should ask, "Why should a man live a useful life?" the briefest answer is, "Because he is fitted for it." The possession of a power is the pledge of its use; the condition of the ownership of a talent is its right employment. Consider man as a mechanism merely, as a piece of machinery fitted to do work, and where will you find his equal? I have seen the hand of man likened to a chest of tools, and it is not an inapt illustration. Man's hand contains a variety of pincers, a hammer, chisels, auger, etc. The original meaning of "manufacture" was handmade, and even to-day, in spite of the perfected machinery, for the production of the best articles we need to go back to first principles, and make things by hand. Add to this the power of brain, imagination, contrivance and invention — and what cannot man do for the promotion and betterment of the creature-comforts of his fellows?

Enter the realm of the moral and intellectual,

consider the treasures of philosophy, science, poetry, art, music, architecture and the like — and we see in the rich catalogue of what man has done, what he is fitted to do, to advance and elevate the life of his brothers.

Add to this man's spiritual equipment, if for argument's sake we may separate these gifts from others, and we behold the rich possession of the Christian man — the truth and power which are his to bless and brighten all life.

Not only do we find, in reason and in Scripture, that these gifts are bestowed upon man that he may increase and use them unselfishly, but we likewise find within the man himself a court and judge to whom he must answer, for the use or misuse of these possessions. The man who lives the useful life is the man who lives the blessed life in this respect, and is the man who has the commendation of his conscience. The man who lives uselessly is, in general terms, the miserable man, and the man who is under the condemnation of that same inward mentor. A man can do no worse than to do nothing at all. And it is in response to this unchangeable edict of nature, that many a man, feeling himself to be no longer of use in the world, has adjudged himself worthless, and taken his own life. In an interesting book, a study of Fetichism among the Africans

in the Congo region, I find a supreme illustration of this desire in man to be of use to his fellows. Says the writer, in substance, "If there were no hereafter, if I did not believe in a world to come, and did not feel the need of using this present world as a preparation for the future world, still the mere present utility of blessing and bettering the condition of life among these poor Africans, the reward of making lighter their burden and brighter their lot for this present time, would be reason enough for my service and my sacrifice."

We find still another ground in reason for living an active, useful life — because there is such need for it in this world. God never made a man to be idle, he has put him into a world that has constant need of his care; the earth is calling for his thought, the creatures of earth are asking for his help. The terms of the original lease under which this earth was left to man for a season are that he should "till and subdue" it; while he fulfills these conditions he shall have dominion; as long as he lives up to these terms he shall be master; but only so. Let him violate this first contract, and the earth is taken away from him and becomes his master. There is not a garden that grows that does not call lustily every morning through the summer season for the care, at-

tention and service of its owner. The natural tendency of all things earthly, material and immaterial, to retrograde and degenerate if neglected and left to themselves, is nature's universal call to man to be up and doing, and to fulfill this command of Jesus.

To the man who has the observation to read the facts of nature and the ability to interpret the lessons of nature, the obligation and worth of the active and useful life is imperative.

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction." ¹

It is because it is in accord with the constitution of things that Christ's command is spoken. While some say it is right for man to live a useful life because Christ commands it, it would be more true to say that he commands it because it is right. Christ commands the useful life because it is a prime necessity of right living — who rightly lives must truly serve.

If we bring this principle down to the world of men, we are here taught by our Master what

¹ Prov., 24:30-32.

it is to be useful. It is in the first place to be a preservative element in the world. "Ye are the salt of the earth" is not used in a complimentary, but in a real, sense. Sodium is one of the elements; its relation to life is universal and important. It is present in the composition of water, rocks, plants and animals. Its preservative character is illustrated by J. E. Johnson in these words, "The whole globe would be one stupendous mass of putrefaction but for the saline nature of the ocean." This statement may be applied in a moral as well as a material sense. It is at least a significant fact that sodium is present in all living organisms; it is a life element. It is salt which prevents corruption and dissolution, and when we realize that Jesus was talking to a people who lived in a country where the temperature rose high at certain seasons, and where ice was probably not used or little used for refrigeration, as it is among us, his figure of speech becomes most apposite. What he says to his followers is this: If the world is to be kept morally pure and spiritually fresh it must be by the lives of those who have within them the salt of my spirit and teaching. It is the Christ-life which is to-day the savior of the world. And in that proportion and to that degree shall men be of use to their kind, as they possess or lack the ele-

ments of that character, which he has exhibited to them in his opening words, and which forms the savor of the "living salt."

Further, says our Master, to live a useful life is to be an illuminative force in the world. "Ye are the light of the world." The connection of light with life is inseparable and vital. Where light is there is life, where life is there light must be. "Let there be light" was the first command at the dawn of Creation. And it is through the agency of light that physical life has been called into being and has been maintained. The meaning of the light of the sun to the world is a subject hard to exhaust; it means warmth, cheer, health, beauty, energy, life. We are in sympathy with those early worshipers of the sun, who bowed in worship before the brightness and glory, before the beauty and majesty, of the great King of Day — they had discovered a great law of nature.

The light of the sun is, indeed, the source and spring of all our physical life and energy. The power of physical life is not from within man but from without, from the great center of our physical system, mediated to us through the multiplied physical agencies of this material world. Says Professor Tyndall in his "Fragments of Science": "The sunbeams excite our interest and

invite our investigation; but they also extend their beneficent influences to our fruits and corn, and thus accomplish not only intellectual ends, but minister at the same time to our material necessities." ² And again, in his lecture on Force, says this same author: "But there is still another work which the sun performs, and its connection with which is not so obvious. Trees and vegetables grow upon the earth, and when burned they give rise to heat, and hence to mechanical energy." . . . "We cannot, however, stop at vegetable life, for it is the source, mediate or immediate, of all animal life. The sun severs the carbon from its oxygen and builds the vegetable; the animal consumes the vegetable thus formed, a reunion of the severed elements takes place, producing animal heat. The process of building a vegetable is one of winding up; the process of building an animal is one of running down. The warmth of our bodies and every mechanical energy which we exert, trace their lineage directly to the sun. The fight of a pair of pugilists, the motion of an army, or the lifting of his own body by an Alpine climber up a mountain slope, are all cases of mechanical energy drawn from the sun." ³

This is the meaning of physical light to a

² Tyndall's "Fragments of Science," I: On the Study of Physics.

³ Tyndall's "Fragments of Science," I: Force.

physical world. These are the first principles of science, fundamental facts of life. We may not understand all the processes, but the prime facts are certain.

In like manner, says our Teacher, spiritual light is the source of spiritual energy — that man who has the light within him is that man who sheds the light about him, and where the light is there is the life also.

We need but mention such lives, symbolized by the names of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle — Augustine, Paul, Luther, Bunyan and Lincoln — and Jesus the Christ, the greatest of them all; we need but consider for a moment their effect and influence in the world, for beautifying, vivifying, glorifying, those with whom they came into touch, to realize the meaning of the Master's teaching, "Ye are the light of the world." "Let your light shine before men."

If now we ask, How does this usefulness practically express itself in the world — of personality? Jesus here by implication answers that question.

It is not things, nor principles, nor truths, but Persons that are to be the *preservative* of the moral and spiritual life in a moral and spiritual world.

It is not things, nor principles, nor truths, but

PERSONS that are the *illuminating and energizing* centers of the moral and spiritual life in a moral and spiritual world. “*I am the light of the world,*” “*Ye are the light of the world,*” is the formula containing these truths.

This is the teaching of the Christ — and this is in accord with the facts of life and with the conclusions of all sane, sound men. In that ethical handbook of Buddhism the “Dhammapada or Path to Virtue,” this truth is expressed in these words, “The scent of flowers does not travel against the wind, nor that of sandal wood or of Tagara and Malikâ flowers, but the odor of good people travels even against the wind; a good man pervades every place.” Again, in the same book, “A man does not become a Brahman by his plaited hair, by his family or by birth: in whom there is truth and righteousness he is blessed, he is a Brahman.”

The community is good or bad according to the good or bad persons in it. It may have the completest knowledge — the finest system of education, the most perfect theology, the latest science, and yet be a community of persons whose lives are savorless, because these things are merely trifled with and not eaten, assimilated, appropriated and expressing themselves in the daily power of personality. If the Sabbath is to

be preserved it must be preserved, not by lectures, pamphlets, tractates on the subject, but by persons loving the Sabbath and living the Sabbath, in accord with its fundamental ideas of a day of rest and worship. If the Bible is to keep its place and influence in the world, this must be accomplished by those persons who give the Bible its right place and its due influence in their daily lives. If the home is to be kept from degradation and disintegration, this can be attained only by those persons who live true and loyal to the homes which they represent. This phase of the question Jesus further elaborates when he speaks of the necessity of Living the Pure Life.

If the Kingdom of God is to make any real progress, this must be by persons, daily, hourly, on work days and worship days, in business, and in associations with their fellows, expressing in their actions and in the multiplied manifestations of their lives, those principles for which the Kingdom stands.

The religion which Jesus taught is eminently practical; it descends to the most trivial and most commonplace matters of our ordinary lives, as we shall see in his later expositions. The value of a good man to a community is hard to overestimate, yet his worth is faintly figured in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis, where God says to

Abraham, "if there are ten righteous in Sodom, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake." A *good* man is worth as much to a community to-day as he ever was. And surely it is a fact that the good people are "the salt of the earth," and the Christ-like are "the light of the world."

How more clearly and forcibly could we have presented to us the practical character of the religion of Christ? His religion is not compliance with set forms and prescribed ceremonies — it is not a service that is satisfied with temple worship and temple rite. His religion is a religion of the heart, a religion of the spirit, a religion that influences and determines the center and springs of action of the entire man. It is a religion that must be kept by the entire man or it is not kept by the man at all. It concerns a man in all relations of all his life — the highest and the lowest — the sublimest moment of vision and in the doing of so simple a thing as giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Does not this broad and beautiful teaching of what Christ means by religion, mark the absurdity and worthlessness of what men have often taught and practiced for religion? Does it not condemn, in a sentence, the mechanical, formal,

cold, periodic, ritualistic, external, pharisaic elements of religion as not of the essence of his religion? And are not these the very features of religion on which men of a former day and men of the present day have too often laid their emphasis? Form of baptism, method of worship, written or *ex tempore* prayer, metaphysics of the creeds, while they may have a place, while they may have an importance, to some minds, yet their place is not the first nor is their importance the greatest in a religion which lays so little stress on externalities, and so great an emphasis on the realities; which says in so many words, "Have the spirit of religion and let the form take care of itself."

It is this reality and breadth of the religion of Jesus which commends many a life that the church has condemned, and which condemns many a life which the church has commended. When we consider the height and depth, the breadth and fullness, of that religion which Jesus taught, when we realize that it is co-extensive and coincident with the totality of a man's life, then we understand, as never before, that to be a person of religion after Christ's sense is an interminable work. A man may learn a trade in a few months, and be a master-workman; a man may know his profession or calling in a few years, and become

an authority; a man may attain to almost any earthly accomplishment in time; but to be really a man of religion is to be something that is coincident with all trades, callings, accomplishments, works; to be something that continues through life and forever and ever.

The maxim which Jesus here gives his learners is this: "Be, in order that you may do."

The man who has the salt of the kingdom within him, the man who is himself lighted by the spirit of Jesus, cannot fail to live a useful life.

CHAPTER III

LIVE A PROGRESSIVE LIFE

Matt. v, 17-20

GROWTH is a fundamental mark of all life; where there is life there is growth; where there is no growth there is no life. The religion of Jesus is a life, and he came that they might have life and have it in evermore abundance. With the gift of life in all its phases, which comes from God, there of necessity comes with it the power and certainty of growth. When God imbued dead matter with the royal gift of life, the possibility and promise of progress were included in that gift. Within the tiny seed of physical life was wrapped all the development, all the advancement, all the progress of that life, from the earliest primordial germ to the highest, most perfectly organized form of life which we find to-day. The path from the first most simple form to the last most perfect form is termed the way of progress.

Progress is the watchword and slogan of to-day. Men have often feared and frequently affirmed that religion destroys progress. Too

often has this fear been realized because men have accepted and adopted a dead rather than a living religion. That which differentiates the religion of Jesus from any other religion that has ever been known is that the religion of Christ is the religion of life, and hence the religion of progress. Plainly, in this passage, as well as elsewhere, does Jesus declare that religion does not destroy, but *per contra* the true religion, the religion which he taught, is the promise and prophecy of progress to perfection.

“I am not come to destroy the law” (law, which is simply a formula of the way in which God is working out the development of the race), but to bring it to its fulfillment and perfection. It is the vital, living, progressive element in the religion of Christ which makes it suitable to all men of all ages; it is this which takes such a hold upon the hearts of men; it is the fact and principle of this progress which we would seek to exhibit in this chapter.

In these words, “I am not come to destroy but to fulfill,” we have the Master’s promise of progress to completion. Jesus is speaking in this discourse to his disciples on the great subject of life—and here he intimates to them the fact of growth and the large lines along which this life must develop.

If we view the unfolding of life, in the records that are left for us in the book of nature, we read that there has ever been a steady progress. We observe that life has unfolded from the simplest forms to the simpler, to the simple, to the complex, the more complex, the most complex. Whatever may be the truth or falsehood of the evolutionary theory as an explanation of the origin or variation of living species, this much is clear, that there has been an upward progress in all living organisms.

As an incident of this progress we observe that old forms have passed away, old conditions have been changed, whole races of creatures have disappeared, that they might give place to the new, and the new has ever taken the place of the old. This is one great law of the physical world. That which is true in the world of nature is true in the world of men, because men are part of the world of nature.

History reveals like progress with biology — old customs, old institutions, old languages, old nations, have gradually disappeared, and the new has come in to take their places. What has been true of the whole of the life of man has, likewise, been true of the parts of it; myth and fable have yielded place to fact and history, astrology and alchemy with all their fascination and with such

truth and use as they had, have been supplanted by modern science; and likewise religion has felt the touch and change of time, has broken the shell of its former, narrower self and has built for itself statelier mansions to accommodate its larger, growing spirit. Old practices, old creeds, old forms, old rites, may pass, must pass, because the religion which Jesus Christ taught is living, and so keeps pace with the progress of the ages. Jesus here tells his disciples that this is the way of God's working, which is only another name for God's law.

In this teaching of the progress of the religion which Jesus exhibits, he further shows that the progress is not to be by the destruction of that which has been; his work is not the destruction of the law and the prophets, but the promotion and furtherance of those very things for which they stood. The old law is not abrogated, but interpreted and expanded — made fuller and more binding by this very principle of progress. His disciples must not think that the law was worthless because it now comes in new form. The old law must still be maintained in its principle, and never can be abrogated, for it is the law of God. The old law contains within it the new, had they but the spiritual eyes to see it. It is of the old law that the new is born, under the

quickenings touch of his interpretation. The new law was in the old as the full flower is within the seed, and as the "child is father to the man." He had not come to teach men to break the law — those who broke and taught men so to do should be called the least in the kingdom; and it was those who respected, taught and did the law who should be called great in this heavenly kingdom. No, it was not to destroy, nor to weaken, nor to make less binding that law which had been a guide to their fathers for so many years, that law which had brought their nation to such honor and glory, that he was speaking, but that this law might be made fuller, more far reaching, more binding, more penetrative and pervasive. To keep and honor the law, as their fathers and teachers had done, for so many centuries, was not enough for these children of a larger growth — while this might do for those who lived in the dawn of the centuries it would never do for these who were living in his day and under the light of the glorious Gospel of the Christ.

This the Master makes very plain to them — he leaves no doubt in the matter — he says to them in so many words, "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall *exceed* the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of

heaven." And then in the following sections, he proceeds to quote from the old law, after the letter, and interprets it in the new way, after the spirit.

Says the Master, "Ye have heard," quoting the old law, "thou shalt not kill." "But I say unto you," this law must go deeper than a mere outward observance—it must lay hold of the heart and be made to read, "Thou shalt not hate."

"Ye have heard, thou shalt not commit adultery." "But I say unto you, thou shalt have a pure heart."

"Ye have heard, thou shalt not forswear." "But I say unto you, thou shalt live in such accord with the truth—that thou shalt not need to swear at all."

Is this not progress, advance, growth immediate and growth prospective?

What Jesus seeks to inculcate is a more perfect and fuller keeping of the law—his law looks toward the inward reality of love, purity and truth, rather than to the outward conformity, signified in murder, adultery and forswearing.

This certainty and promise of progress is given to us in Christ's attitude toward his own life work. What evidence had he of success in his work, after such devotion, such teaching, such

works — a handful of followers. What cause had he for expectations or encouragement — priests and rulers against him, Pharisees and Sadducees seeking to overthrow him, the people of the land but feebly and fearfully following him. Yet what hope, nay confidence, nay certainty of success had he! “Heaven and earth may pass away, but my word cannot pass away.” He was never a despondent, never a disheartened and never a defeated, man. He knew that the times would grow to his teaching, because he knew the power and operation and progress of the truth. Therefore he could say to them with confidence, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed — very, very small in its beginnings, but it shall become great indeed. It is like the leaven, working secretly, silently, slowly, but it shall leaven the entire lump of life.

And while he knew the certainty of growth, he also knew the law of growth, “First the blade and then the ear and then the full corn in the ear,” and so he was content to work and wait and know.

Following this hint which Jesus gives us, that the law of progress obtains in the things of the kingdom of heaven, let us apply the teaching to those facts that may come under our observation, and is it not evident that there is this pro-

gressive element in the revelation of that religion which has come from God? Is not the revelation in Scripture a progressive revelation, coincident with the development of mankind? "I have many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now."¹ What are the earliest forms of teaching concerning God found in the Bible? Are not these truths of God given to us in types, figures, story-form? We are not now considering them at all critically nor as to their content, but only asking concerning their form. The story of the Creation — the story of the Fall — the story of the two brothers — the story of the Deluge — the story of the high tower — these are the earliest forms of the Bible teaching, and how well they are adapted to the child mind we well know. Then follows the form of biography — lessons taught in the lives of great characters. Men are made to appear before us and the principle appears in the person. This is a later form adapted to a larger growth. Then God is revealed in detached precepts, ceremonies, rites, things to be done, that principles may be learned in the doing. Then comes the time of a larger freedom, a more spiritual revelation, given by the prophets. Then after a long time comes the Christ. He gave very few precepts,

¹ Jno. xvi, 12.

had little to do with form, but much with spirit. This is the religion of principle. This is the religion adapted to a more mature age — to children of a larger growth. It was principle, principle, principle that Jesus taught, and insisted upon — and this is suited to the liberty of the Gospel and to the individuality of spirit. Thus we see that the revelation that has been made is from the simpler and concrete to the more complex and abstract, and yet — that which is new in the revelation has been ever born out of that which is old, the earliest stories of Genesis agree largely with the latest principles of the Gospel teaching, and “in the beginning God” is the seed from which the entire organism has grown.

That there is this progressive element in the religion of Christ is shown from a mere glance at the relation of this religion to the progress of civilization. Men to-day are better fed, better clothed, better housed, living in better material and physical conditions, surrounded with more “creature comforts,” because of the principle, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” And when it comes to the social relations of men, the advance and betterment is directly traceable to the progressive element in the religion of Christ.

Says Richard Storrs,² “The religion which had

² For a full discussion and evidencing of this entire question

shown God to mankind, so as before he had not been conceived, the same religion showed man to himself, so as before he had not been imagined, in the greatness of his nature, in his immortality." "In regard to this conception of the soul, its dignity and worth, the race has been a new one, since Jesus taught it, and so far as his religion has gone."

As the religion of Jesus gave birth to a "new conception of man," so did it give rise to a new conception of woman. "Just so soon, and just so far, as Christianity gained its place in the empire, the position of woman, social and legal, instantaneously improved; and this was the effect of direct, immediate, constant pressure, from the religion brought by Jesus."

Says our writer further, "Of the universality of slavery in the world into which this new religion entered, you need not be reminded." But the times have changed from the day when one-half of the Roman population were slaves — the race has progressed, and slavery, in its cruder forms, forever has been abolished from the civilized nations. "The Sermon on the Mount, God's affectionate and watchful fatherhood of all, the brotherhood of disciples, the mutual duty and

see "The Divine Origin of Christianity—Indicated by its Historical Effects," by Richard Storrs, D.D., LL.D.

common immortality of poor and rich — these were the forces before which slavery inevitably fell.” Through the preaching of the Carpenter’s Son labor has been elevated to a new dignity. That life of work which in former days was assigned to the slaves and by them despised and counted a shame and a curse, by the teaching of that one who said, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work,” has been raised to the divine privilege of service, which is a command laid upon all men and all classes.

Says Lyman Abbott,³ “He reversed the world’s standard of values. He taught that wealth consists in character, not in possession. He reversed the world’s measure of greatness, He that is greatest among you he shall be your servant.”

Everywhere to-day where Christianity is taught and followed, the emphasis is laid on service, not for self, but for our fellows. “Praying is seeking strength for service; psalm-singing is giving thanks for the privilege of serving; but the service is in hospitals, mission schools, church schools, college settlements, boys’ clubs, girls’ clubs, political and social reforms — a thousand philanthropies, some material, some intellectual, some spiritual; but all seeking one great end —

³ “Christianity and Social Problems,” Lyman Abbott, p. 20.

the promotion of human welfare and human happiness." ⁴

Even the governments of the world's nations, where the religion of Christ has made itself felt, have been changed in the purpose and object of their existence. In the older nations and in the former time, the people existed for the sake of the State — it was the people who were the servants and the State which was the served; to-day it is a common and well-recognized principle of political science that the government exists for the sake of the people, and is to be such a government as shall best serve the greatest number.

Nor could we pass over this general progress which has been experienced in every department of human affairs, under the vivifying touch of the spirit of Christ's religion, without speaking a few plain words on a much mistaken matter. The statement has gone forth and has been accepted from of old, that the religion of Christ, the church and the clergy, have been the great opponents of intellectual growth and progress. Take the narrowest, most positive form which the Christian religion has perhaps ever assumed, the Church of Rome, and do we not find in her midst spirits who have caught and been influenced by this progressive spirit of the religion of Christ?

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

There was Wycliffe, who was the "morning star of the Reformation"; Huss, the promoter of liberty of thought; Luther, the strength of the liberal movement in the sixteenth century. While the mediæval and even the modern church has been like the old Jewish church, in its attempt to put the new wine of progress into the old skins of set form, yet there have been glorious exceptions to this and these exceptions by those who were the followers of the religion of Christ.

Witness the part the monks and the monasteries have played in the preservation of knowledge and the making of books; witness the part the Puritan has played in the educational system of America. "All the early settlers of New England paid great attention to instructing their children; first at home or in the ministers' houses, and then in public schools." "When the Puritan spirit began to decline there was a falling off in the schools and an increase of illiteracy; but the love of learning never died out, and the free schools never were abandoned."⁵ The motto of the Puritans was "Give light and the darkness will dispel itself. Give education and everything else will right itself in time." And observe that at this period of our nation's history the action of the

⁵ "The Puritan in England, Holland and America," by Douglas Campbell, Vol. I, p. 30.

government was virtually the action of the church. Witness to-day the vital relation that Christian missions everywhere bear to general education; in every country or section of country where the missionary goes, the school goes with him; and then cease to be discouraged by the ignorant statement of the ignorant, that the religion of Christ has always been opposed to education and the progress of knowledge. He who in this particular feels inclined to criticise the critics, has ample reason to do so, for the real facts of the case are that the greatest opponents to the progress of science and invention have been from the ranks of the scientists.

“The great physicians and philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Huygens, Bernouilli, Cassini, Leibnitz, most of them disciples of Descartes, were opposed to Newton’s System of Gravitation.”⁶ After Harvey’s discovery of the circulation of the blood, it was the physicians of his time, who were opposed to him and envied him. Dr. Jenner and his views on vaccination were opposed by men of his own calling. It was the Academy of Paris that attempted to overthrow the microscopic discoveries of Swammerdam and Leeuwenhoeck, a cen-

⁶ *Vid. here et seq.*, “The Philosophical Basis of Theism,” by Samuel Harris, D.D., LL.D., pp. 319-344.

tury after they were made, with the sneer, "One can generally see with the microscope whatever one imagines!"

Observe this, that when the doctrine of evolution was introduced, it was opposed by scientists as well as by theologians; and it was accepted by theologians as well as by scientists; Professor Huxley's biography, written by his son, affords ample and interesting testimony to this fact.

Now if we turn from the negative to the positive side of this question, we find from the earliest times to the very latest hour that churchmen, clergymen, believers in and followers of the religion of Christ have been identified with the promotion and progress of every form of human knowledge, whether in science, politics, philosophy, history or what not. Such names as Sir Humphrey Davy, Linnæus, Sir Isaac Newton, Kepler, Lord Bacon and a host of others might be called to the witness-stand to testify, impartially and equally, to their labors for the progress of human knowledge, and to their belief in the Christ and his religion.

The principle of progress which Jesus Christ is here establishing finds its illustration and application in those fields of action he is about to mention. This passage is introductory to those treated of in the rest of this fifth chapter of Mat-

thew. In the twentieth verse he states the relation of the individual to the principle of progress. What is true of the mass is true of the individual; the life of the follower of the religion Jesus taught must live a progressive life.

This is shown in the life and practice of the Master himself. It is sometimes represented that the religion of Jesus is completed; that nothing can be added to it and nothing can be taken from it. This is true in the sense that we have the complete flower in the good seed, and only in this sense. This is true literally for those who regard the religion of Christ as a Procrustean bed into which the man must be fitted, rather than a living germ which, being planted in the man, adapts itself to the man and the man to itself, modifying and determining the entire life, growth and progress of the individual. The man who holds the religion of Christ as a thing rather than a power, as a form rather than a life, has not yet attained to his teaching.

That this is true is shown by the Master's relation to the long-established, highly respected forms and institutions in vogue in his day. The Sabbath was as old as Creation; it is a command for rest and worship one day in seven, applying to all times and all peoples. Jesus taught a new meaning and way of observing the Sabbath. The

outcome of the old formal observance was slavery: the teaching of the Master is life and liberty.

“The attitude of Jesus toward these outward observances seems to have been at one with the attitude of the prophets. He seems to have constantly pointed out the danger inherent in all externalism, in the use of all forms of symbol, whether material or intellectual, the danger of transforming a means into an end, of resting in the seen instead of reaching through the seen to the unseen, of substituting the visible image for the invisible idea, the letter for the spirit.”

“Brought to book again and again for breaking the Sabbath, he defends himself by the quiet assertion, ‘The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath,’ an assertion which lays its ax to the root of all sacramentalism.”⁷

A like lesson is given us in Jesus’ relation to the temple. The temple idea is as old as the race — it had its fixed forms and meanings. Interpreted, it read a localized deity, some places holy and some things holy. Jesus had little sympathy with these forms; they were too narrow to accommodate the new and larger growth of the Gospel spirit. He taught, “Ye are God’s temple”; all places are holy and all persons may

⁷ “The Religion of Christ in the Twentieth Century,” Anon., pp. 58-123.

be holy. "He foretold the destruction of the temple, and subverted the very foundations of this idolatrous faith by declaring that God can be worshiped at any time and in any place, if the heart in sincerity and simplicity seeks for Him."⁸

This is the same idea which the Master's follower, the apostle Paul, set for himself and expressed in the maxim, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and looking unto those which are before." This idea of progress is the idea the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has set for his readers: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection from the dead and of eternal judgment."

The meaning of this is that there is to be progress in idea, teaching, practice and religious living.

The effect of progress on the unprogressive is evidenced in the story of progress in the entire world of life. For the unyielding, the unprogressive, those who will not recognize life's law and obey it, progress means pain, struggle, pro-

⁸ "Christianity and Social Problems," by Lyman Abbott, p. 22.

⁹ Heb. vi, 1-2.

test and elimination. So has it been with the races of animals, so with the plant life, so with man in every phase of his activity. "Except your righteousness EXCEED the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The promise of progress to the progressive is along this same road of pain and struggle, the inevitable accompaniment of all change; doubts within and opposition from without, but issuing in ever new births, larger life — something to learn, to know and to do for the ages of ages. Thus, with the constantly enlarging sphere of knowledge and privilege comes the constantly enlarging responsibility, until life is religion and religion is life.

CHAPTER IV

LIVE A PEACEABLE LIFE

Matt. v, 21-26

IN those utterances of Christ, which follow in the next three sections, we have an illustration and an application of that principle which has just been propounded: that men are to live the progressive life.

Jesus takes three commands from the old law of Moses, the law with which the Jews were familiar, and shows how these plain commands must be interpreted and applied spiritually if a man is really to have that righteousness of life which he came to establish. Being an interpreter of the law of righteousness, a teacher of mankind, and a corrector of abuses, the Master had again and again to show men that the law must be interpreted and made to apply in spirit and truly, if the law was to be kept. What a man was to seek was not form-righteousness, which the Pharisees had reduced to a science, but fact-righteousness. One time, as the Master was going through Perea, there came running toward him a young man, a ruler in the place and an

earnest, honest inquirer, who asked him: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"You must keep the commandments," replied the Master.

"Which?" asked the zealous seeker, thinking that there might be one he had overlooked.

"Those very commandments you know already — which are summed up in the words, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"But," answered the youth, "all these have I kept from boyhood."

So he had, as his fathers and neighbors had kept them, as you and I keep them, after the letter and the outward form. Then the Master did for his sake just what he is here doing for his disciples' sake, showed the young man that the law was a matter of heart and spirit, a matter of the inner, secret life — and included not only doing nothing to interfere with the neighbor's living his own life and fulfilling his own destiny, but besides this included doing all that he could to help his neighbor live his life as he ought.

You have doubtless heard, as I have heard, a man say, "The Ten Commandments are enough for me; if I keep these I am satisfied, and believe all will go well with me here and hereafter." And the answer is true, and accords with the Master's teaching, but the question arises, "Are not

the Ten Commandments too much for you?" See how the Master interprets them, and then behold their scope and depth of meaning.

In the passage we have before us we have the Master's interpretation of one of the ten words of Moses, and that one of the simplest, the most obvious and the most universal. "Do not murder," is a command that most respectable people think they have fully kept — but see what Christ makes that to mean; and "Thou shalt not kill" becomes "Thou shalt not be angry." Jesus is here placing before us a picture of the passionate man, the man who is ripe for murder.

The world's view of that man is very ancient and very simple. "Ye have heard, of olden time, thou shalt not kill." This command is one of the plainest primer principles of the laws of all peoples. "The right of an individual to life,"¹ is a *sine qua non* to even the simplest civilization. "If there be any rights at all this must be one of them, for life is that essential condition without which no other right can be exercised. Accordingly, usage and law in all nations endeavor to protect it."

I have never heard of a nation, either ancient or modern, nor of a tribe, however primitive, which has not had some form of this law. No

¹ "Political Science," Theodore D. Woolsey, § 21.

one will deny either the propriety or the force of this law — it is clearly recognized in the Old Testament law for Israel, was well known among all ancient peoples, and even in Africa, Patagonia or among the Andaman islanders it obtains with varying modifications and conditions of application — but in its essential form it is a law of all peoples.

Civil law, however, applies only to man's outward conduct, to his overt acts. One may despise, condemn, hate his fellow as he will, but if this inward desire fails of outward expression the law has been observed. This is man's interpretation of the law against murder. According to the kingdoms of this world, one who has not violated the letter of the law is innocent before the law; but, says the Master, what is true for the kingdoms of this world is not true for the kingdom of heaven, but the law must be interpreted and made to apply deeper than overt acts.

So Jesus gives his view. The soul of murder is anger, the seed of murder is anger, the sin of murder is anger — and a man must keep his heart right toward his brother. The passionate man, according to Christ's definition, is the man easily angry, that is "angry without cause." There is such a thing as justifiable anger on the part of a good man. The apostle admonishes,

“Be angry and sin not.” I have heard that Frederick W. Robertson, the Brighton preacher, one day on seeing a dissolute and evil man passing by with a pure young girl as his companion, was so roused and stirred at the sight that he clenched his hands until the nails entered into the flesh. Such a feeling on the part of such a man was not to his shame but to his honor. A while ago I read in a novel of an English Colonel’s treatment of a boy who served as his lackey, an account that fairly made my blood boil. The story runs that two men were rivals for the hand of a young woman; the one was a colonel in the British army and the other was a captain in the colonial forces. The colonel gained possession of a young lad who had served as body-servant to the captain; this boy he abused, degraded, debauched and made a drunkard, in order to work his evil schemes and to irritate and revenge himself on the captain. Here is ground for justifiable anger on the part of any man. Indeed, the man who could look upon such a deed without having his blood boil and free from the desire to correct the abuse and punish the offender, would be a dead, dumb, sapless, travesty of manhood.

The Master himself, when he beheld the degradation and perversion of the temple by the

traffickers in sheep and oxen who were carrying on their commercial enterprises in the name of religion, was so incensed against them that, making a scourge of small cords, he drove them out, saying, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." Whatever the learned and artful commentators may say of this scene, the common-sense people will ever interpret it to mean that he was justifiably angry against the hypocrites.

Yes, injustice, wanton cruelty, heartless oppression of the weak by the strong, coupled with pietistic pharisaism merits and receives from honest and right-minded men just and righteous wrath.

The passionate man here referred to is not this man, but the man who is uncontrolled, not master of himself, whose temper is ever on the hair trigger, who goes about with a chip on his shoulder, and his eye open for infringement of his rights and trespassers on his preserves. Such a man is like one of these five-cent mouse traps, so delicately and sensitively set that if you jar it in the least degree, handle it without the utmost caution, breathe upon it more than ordinary, snap it goes, and some one is hurt. A look and he is incensed, a word and he is in a rage; the slightest crossing of his will and he is ready for violence. Such is the passionate man, the Master teaches,

and the peril of such a heart and temper is fatal. It results in bad morals; such a man is angry with his brother without cause. The first recorded instance in history of such a man shows that it resulted disastrously. Cain was a man of this character — and because of his passionate heart, his angry spirit, he hated his brother, and finally committed outwardly that which had been born inwardly, murder of his brother. Now the man who holds his heart in the attitude of anger and hate toward his brother is the man who already does his brother a wrong, and the man who is in constant peril of an open act of injustice and injury.

The psychological course of such a feeling is traced in the twenty-second verse of this chapter. The man who harbors such a feeling toward his brother is the man who must give expression to the feeling; the first expression is to hold his brother lightly and in contempt — of this feeling is born the contemptuous expression, “Raca”; by this expression is kindled another more bitter, “Thou fool,” — he condemns his brother. Now the subtle poison of anger is present and will work its deadly spell — first the secret springs of thought are poisoned, then the dark fountain bursts forth in the form of bitter words, then follows the contemptuous, unjust, perhaps deadly

deeds. The sin which is within the heart hath conceived and brought forth its baneful progeny — death.

The sin of murder is within the heart; the source of murder is anger — the law against murder must be kept in the secret places of the man. Now, proceeds the Master, in his ever logical, orderly way, he who holds this relation to his brother is in the fire of hell. How many instances we have in our daily life of brothers, neighbors, friends, who because of this susceptibility to anger, this passionate disposition, dwell in a constant state of animosity, hostility, litigation and legal warfare with those with whom they should be at peace.

As I was meditating upon this theme, there came into my hands an illustration of the very fact in point. It is taken from a Philadelphia newspaper. It reads: "After having been dragged through the courts for sixty years the lawsuit of A. C. against W. Z. was finally decided in court here to-day. The suit was over the ownership of a strip of land worth about five dollars. The men and their families, though neighbors, have not spoken to each other for over half a century. The case has been in the Supreme Court at least three times, and no less than thirty thousand dollars has been spent in lawyers' fees and other costs in the litiga-

tion. When the suits involving the question of damages were tried the verdict never exceeded six dollars." The cause of such silly, childish and wicked conduct on the part of men is a bad heart and anger against the brother. The case itself has absolutely no merits. How many instances of like import might be adduced, did we choose to seek them. The Jones County Calf Case is an instance of like character. Some may not be aware that the classic chancery suit of Jarndyce against Jarndyce, satirized in Dickens' "Bleak House," is an actual case taken from the English law reports. Not a day passes that our newspapers do not furnish practical illustration of the truth of the Master's teaching.

Now what is the feeling in the heart, the attitude of brother toward brother, the relation between two who entertain such feelings toward each other? Is it not rightly described as "the hell of fire"? A sight of our opponent sends a shock through the system; the sound of his voice burns like vitriol; his success fills us with hate; his failure stirs us with unholy glee. What now becomes of the great law of God, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"?

What is the inner state of the man who hates his brother? Is it calm, sweet, benevolent, comforting, cheering, elevating, promotive of his own

or his brother's good? Is it not rather like an acid, a constant irritation, a fire of hell within? And what must be the heart and spirit of that man who is so angry with his brother that he would kill him? What is the secret condition of that one who kills his brother and is glad? What a restless, tossing sea of emotions, what a dance of the devils, what a Walpurgis night must enwrap the soul, and craze the mind of a man preparing to do such a deed!

And what of the one who kills and is sorry? Can anything ever right the wrong? You have taken away that which cannot be restored; robbed that which cannot be returned; broken that which cannot be mended. To be in the state of mind resultant upon such a deed, is to welter in the fire of hell — with its remorse, its fear, dread, terror, restlessness, unquiet — with its absence of peace, joy, light, love. Can anything make this beautiful, peaceful world other than a hell, to that passionate man who has murdered? This is the ultimate peril of the passionate man, whose spirit has led him to the end of the way — and this is the relative peril of the man of anger, who will not heed the words of Christ.

But advancing a step higher, ascending into the realm of the more spiritual, our Teacher says passion is incompatible with true piety; these twain

cannot dwell in the same house; anger in the heart makes a worthless religion. The absurdity of an angry worshiper is pictured in the two following verses: God is love; hate cannot dwell in the presence of love. He who sits in a church service and bears malice and hate toward another, who has the unforgiving and bitter spirit, had better bide at home. Such an one is a "*persona non grata*" at the court of heaven. As well might the devil, because he has a good voice, join in the choring of the angels before the throne of God as for an angry heart to sing praises in the temple — no acceptable music can issue from such inharmonious sources. The man is seeking to right with words that which he has wronged with deeds; seeking to correct by a fiction that which can only be righted by a fact. Such a man is false, untrue, a hypocrite; he is but adding wrong to wrong, insult to injury. He is wronging first himself, next his brother, but most and always the God and Father of them both. Observe the viewpoint of the Master changes a little here, the obligation is laid not on the offended but on the offender — the text reads, "If thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee." The right-minded man will go more than half the way to right the wrong, and to dwell in harmonious relations with his brother, for the sake of the common Father

of them both.

Then follows the counsel, light-clear, emphatic, explicit. Set right the heart, then practice your religion. When you come into the temple, with your offering to God, whether of goods, or words, or praise, or promise or what not — leave them there, do not offer them in vain, go thy way, “be reconciled to thy brother,” then return and offer the fact to God, and be assured that His face will smile upon you, and His peace will possess your soul. The best worship to God is the justice done to the brother. Could anything more pointedly emphasize the truth that the religion which Jesus taught is a religion of fact and not a religion of form? Be able to recite the deeds acceptable to God, and forgetfulness of the creeds will not offend. Have the substance of religion and the forms will take care of themselves.

What now thinkest thou of that simple law of murder, according to the rendering of Christ? Hast thou kept it? Canst thou keep it? Then blessed art thou of God.

The Master then makes the application of the desirability of a peaceable heart for the common affairs of a common life. Religion is life — life is religion. So common a thing, so wholesome a thing, so practical a thing is religion that it applies to and mingles with the everyday affairs

of the everyday life. That which he teaches in the two following verses men call Ethics — it is merely a practical wisdom for the common life, and yet who can gainsay its excellence.

The special term “brother” is now abandoned, its meaning being established and taken for granted.

Living means differences, differences mean friction, friction means irritation, heat, pain — be aware of this, be prepared for this. These are the accidents and incidents of life, unavoidable, certain. There are aggravating and irritating experiences every day, and when we least expect them. There are many men and many minds; differences of circumstances, estate, opinion, character, practice, religion. Play the part of the wise man, says our Teacher, and have a peaceable heart, for a peaceable heart is the best preparation for living in such a world. And yet, live as you will, live the best you know how, differences will arise, the best of men will find themselves opposed by an adversary, one hostile, unfriendly. Should you find yourself in this condition, the Master tells us to come to some agreement with him, as quickly as possible. It may be at a loss of some of your rights, your privileges, your comfort, your money — but agree on the best terms possible. Is not this the most common sense and

practical counsel that could be given? Does it not sound like some good legal advisor, seeking his clients' best interests? Is it not an evidence of our Lord's deep knowledge of men and the world? Is it not the counsel that the wise and prudent man will follow? Is it not in the long run, the safest course to pursue?

"Agree with thine adversary," says the Master, lest thou be brought to utter ruin. Then with skilled hand he traces the course that so many men, unaware or unappreciative of his words, have followed to their destruction. "Lest the adversary deliver thee to the judge, the judge to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." Right may be with you, justice may be on your side, but the adversary may be stronger, more influential, more wealthy, more astute than thou, and such things have been done in this world as are here described. "In prison!" behold the ruin of your happiness! the happiness of your family, your friends, your associates. But still further, the adversary is not content; there is hate and bitterness in his heart — what he wants is your complete destruction, "Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou have paid the last farthing." Counsel fees, costs of court, case gone against you, domestic expenses continuing, the little hoard you have saved exhausted; behold! ruin of your es-

tate. How many a man can certify to the truth of this teaching, learned from the harsher, crueller teacher, Experience. If you did not love the adversary before, you do not now love him better because of all that has happened to you. The little breach which might have been bridged at the beginning has now grown to a chasm impossible to cross. You hate him, hate him, hate him — you hate his and those associated with him in this wicked business, you are bitter toward men, toward the world, toward the innocent and guiltless, your heart is poisoned, your soul is on fire — your entire life has been ruined. This same road has many a man traveled to his complete destruction. Be thou wise; enter not upon it, “agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art with him in the way.”

In short, live the peaceable life, because the other, the life of the brawler, the easily angry, the passionate man, results in bad blood, bad manners, bad morals, bad religion and utter ruin.

CHAPTER V

LIVE A PURE LIFE

Matt. v, 27-32

THE visible is born of the invisible, the audible of the inaudible, the tangible of the intangible and the material of the immaterial. Everywhere in this wide world of phenomena, the seen, felt and heard is but the manifestation and offspring of that which is unseen, impalpable and in secret. We walk through a summer field, mantled with green and spangled with flowers of rainbow hue, vibrant with sound and palpitant with all forms of life. That symphony of sound, that galaxy of glory, that ever-changing pageant of beauty and of life, is altogether a product of forces, influences, principles — secret, silent and unseen.

History with its reigns and dynasties, its courts and councils, its wars and conquests, its ever varying and constantly changing scene of action, is the product of the invisible, the spiritual, the personal. The deeds of men are but the outward symbols of their inward thoughts.

What is true of the world at large is true of

the world in little; what is true of the mass is true of the man; therefore the wise men of old have written in constantly varying form the eternal truth, "Keep with all diligence thy heart, for out of it are the issues of life."

And therefore our Teacher, in this passage, seeks to fix the thought and attention of his hearers on the transcendent importance of keeping the springs of their lives free from impurity and pollution. In few and simple words the Master at once exhibits to his learners the heights of purity to which they are to climb. He begins at the foot of the mountain, by calling their attention to the law given by Moses and familiar to them from the earliest years of their childhood, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

This law, like that which just precedes it, "Thou shalt not kill," belongs to the primer of legislation. It is a law fundamental, simple, obvious, universal in its form. We can say with assurance that it is a law of nature and a law of nations. And this we can affirm, in spite of all that has been said and written concerning the primitive peoples, and the aboriginal savages.

Every nation that makes a claim to be a nation has some law regarding this matter on its statute books, and even those peoples who have not risen to the dignity of written laws have some

form of a common and unwritten law against the practice of adultery. That is to say, every people has had some form or custom regulating the relations between the sexes, and in some degree recognizing the sanctity of family ties. And this we affirm so confidently, because even those sexual relations which seem to us to disregard this law are, according to the method of interpretation of the peoples among whom they prevail, considered a keeping of the law; since the world's method of interpretation is that the law against adultery is one that is to be kept not internally and in the spirit, but externally and after the outward form. Therefore, while we may be speaking of a people or tribe like the Caribs, the Esquimaux or the Aleutian Islanders, who practice polyandry, or of a people like the Fuegians, the native Australians and the Tasmanians, who practice polygyny, both polyandry and polygyny are observances of this law after the outer form; for, among all these peoples, while these relations may be loose yet they are in some degree restricted, and while a civilized man might regard them as immoral we have no doubt that they consider themselves as a moral people and would repudiate the accusation that their marriage forms are not regulated by custom, which to them is law.

It is plain that Mohammedanism and Mormonism, which to us are palpable departures from this law, by the Mohammedans and Mormons themselves are regarded as a keeping of this law. Each of these peoples pretend to live according to a law concerning the sacredness of marriage, and each of these peoples would repudiate the idea that they are adulterers because they hold and practice customs in their sexual relations which a higher civilization cannot approve. In the Congo State in East Africa we are afforded an illustration among certain tribes to what extent this outward keeping of the law may go, while the plain spirit of the law is violated. I recollect to have read that among certain tribes in the Congo region, the law against adultery is very stringent, being punished, if I rightly recall, by the death penalty; and yet it is not an uncommon thing among them for a host, as an act of courtesy, to loan his wife to a guest. Surely the people of the United States pretend to and pride themselves on the keeping of this law, and yet, when we consider how lightly the marriage bond is held and how easily it may be dissolved — when we realize that we believe ourselves to have complied with the law when we have complied with the outer form of the law — the question presents itself to us whether we are in any fit posi-

tion to find fault with the other peoples of the earth.

Nay, the point we emphasize is this — the stress is laid on the spirit of the law rather than on the form of the law, and the Master calls our attention to the necessity of keeping of the law against adultery in the heart.

Jesus, in contrast to the teaching of all the world that the law against adultery is kept or broken externally, affirms that this law is kept or broken internally. Jesus recognizes and approves the olden law, but he fulfills this law as he did that against murder by giving us the higher, truer meaning of the law.

Says he, we must go deeper than the surface of the matter; the law must be made to apply to the heart and the spirit. The “Do not *do*” is made to read, “Do not think,” “Do not be.” The observation or violation of this law lies in the heart before it appears in the life.

In his words, “Every one that looketh upon a woman for the purpose of lusting after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,” we have set before us such an ideal and such a height of purity as the world had not dreamed of, such a height as seems almost unattainable. Yet who can deny the essential truth of the statement of the Master? Who can deny that what

is reasonable and desirable is the keeping of the law of purity in the heart and in the spirit?

In these striking words of Christ we are given still another lesson as to what the religion of Christ really means — again we are afforded an example of what he means when he says, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

What God demands in His children is not FORM righteousness, not the outward and mechanical conformity of the steps and life to a given norm, not sacrifices, services, prayers and professions of the outer man, but He requires FACT righteousness, a setting right of the sources of action, thinking, willing — keeping pure the heart. Thus we are made to see, quite contrary to our beliefs and practices oftentimes, that religion is the realest of all relations, and the least formal of all expressions of life. We are to worship Him in the spirit and in truth.

Having thus set before his hearers such an ideal of purity, the Master now seeks to encourage them and to stimulate them to effort by exhibiting to them the worth of the kind of purity he inculcates. He says in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses such purity is worth your utmost sacrifice and it will demand and necessitate your

utmost sacrifice. This fact he illustrates to them under the figure of "the eye" and "the hand." In these words he teaches that that body which is dear to every man, must be sacrificed and counted of less value than the soul, which is dearer. These words contain figures and are not to be taken literally, for to interpret them literally is to violate the very principle he is trying to establish.

Christ is not teaching the inherency of evil in the body. He never held and never intimated this vagary of the Scholastic philosophy. But the violation of the law to which he is referring is peculiarly a temptation of the body, therefore the sacrifice of the body is a most apposite illustration of the principle he would establish. To take this figure literally, as did the Manicheans, the Essenes and the monks of the Middle Ages, is to do violence to the spiritual principle which the law teaches. To read the lesson thus is to be false to the principle, which is, Purify the springs of action, the heart, mind and will. To cut off the hand, pluck out the eye, injure the body, is futile, for it does not purify the heart. To so interpret his lesson is to be guilty of that practice which the Master condemns, the outward keeping of the law. The end of the law is not the destruction of the body, but the purification

of it.

In a word, the principle of religion here taught is that in living, the lower ought to be sacrificed to that which is higher. To paraphrase the text, it reads, "If your eye delights in anything, if your hand would fain do anything which is destructive of the heart and the spirit life within, deny the body and sacrifice the flesh for the sake of the spirit."

The man is worth more than the body or than any part of it. The law which guides a wise man is, to be willing to sacrifice the lower to that which is higher; this law can be learned not by contemplation and meditation but by actually doing the thing required. Religion of this kind is an eminently practical religion.

This is the principle that guides the true seeker after knowledge; the young man or woman who would make the attainment of knowledge the aim of his activities must be willing to plod along the weary, monotonous road which leads to learning. He must be willing to deny himself many a pleasure which is offered to him, to forego many a delightful day of idleness; he must be ready to work when his body would more willingly sleep, to tire his brain and try his nerve when the comforts of the flesh would beckon him to easy repose. In other words, to sacrifice his bodily comfort to his

mental enrichment. This must the student of art do; he must be actuated by a similar spirit. He must count his art above his eating, or drinking or ease; he must have the spirit of willingness to lay these things on the altar of self-sacrifice for his art's sake. And of like kind must be the stuff of which is made the true seeker after the kingdom of heaven. This is the principle which actuated and which is illustrated in the story of the three Israelitish young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. For the sake of their religion, for the cause of their God, they were willing to keep themselves from the luxury, the ease and the temptations of the Babylonian court. For the sake of the higher good they were willing to forego the lower good, and so the blessing of their God rested upon them.

This is the course which a wise and true man will pursue, as is intimated in the words, "It is profitable for thee."

What the impure seeks, in yielding to his passionate desires, is gratification, pleasure, happiness and, what seems to him in his blindness, good. What the impure gets is a hell of fire. An appetite is aroused within him that only fattens by what it feeds upon. A thirst is created that only increases the more he drinks. Having

given himself over to sin he becomes the slave of sin, and the sense of liberty he knows no longer. How many a voluptuary, roué, panderer and slave of the flesh can and does testify to the truth of Christ's teaching, "It is profitable for thee"!

Here Christ's religion joins its voice with common morality, and practical wisdom, and declares in no uncertain tone that the way to the good, the blessed, the free life, is along that road which sacrifices the lower to the higher, the flesh to the spirit.

Having thus set forth in such striking lines the purity and its worth which the man of Christ is to seek, the Master now makes a practical application of the lesson he has taught. In a former section of this discourse he spoke of a principle necessary for the promotion and well-being *of the life of society*; there, he said, have a life free from hate, anger and enmity toward the brother — live the peaceable life. In this passage he gives a principle that will preserve society's chief bulwark and foundation; he makes a plea for the preservation of the home and the family. Christ's application of the teaching concerning heart-purity in this connection evidences anew the importance of the institution of the family and shows the gravity of the chief peril which threatens it.

Marriage is a sacred relation; it is built on a moral conviction at the very beginning. It is an institution of society, but more than this it is an ordinance of God. The violation of the marriage relation is more than a mere breach of contract, like the dissolution of partnership or the failure to perform a stipulated piece of work; it is a transgression of the law of God, and it is from this point that Christ here views it.

Says Milton, "Marriage is the highest form of society," and Fraser has written, "Marriage is the parent of civil society."¹ Says Thwing, "The conception of marriage as purely secular has been at the basis of our modern divorce legislation." "The institution of marriage rests upon a triangular base. It is founded upon the interests of the individual, upon the interest of the State, and upon divine ordinance. To weaken this foundation upon any side causes the structure to totter."

Marriage on the divine side is for the continuance of the race, the protection and training of children and the development of the character of the husband and wife. That marriage is a divine institution the State bears witness when it appoints the clergy as its official to perform the

¹ See on this entire question, "The Family," by C. F. and C. F. B. Thwing, and "Divorce and Divorce Legislation," by Woolsey.

sacred ceremony.

But marriage also sustains a relation to the State; it is the best basis for social order; affords the best provision for the sick, the aged and the infirm; and the principles, useful to the State, of justice, courage and truth are best taught and best promoted in the family. Marriage also has a distinct relation to the individual; it offers the best school of development for the noblest personality and is in itself the truest type of the divine government, as is evidenced by the frequency with which Jesus quotes the family relations in illustrating God's attitude toward His children.

Thus, the preservation of that which is highest and best in the marriage relation is the preservation of the home, the preservation of the family, the preservation of the State, and the preservation of the highest and best within man and within the race.

But nothing so militates against this sacred and helpful institution of marriage as impurity. This is what Christ teaches in this passage. Impurity violates the marriage bond in fact, and therefore it may be recognized as broken in form. It is not our desire to give statistics on a subject on which statistics are unavailable, and on which they are inefficient in detail. All that statistics do is to reveal the frequency with which the mar-

riage bond is dissolved and the lightness with which so many hold the marriage tie. We believe, however, that the root of most of the divorces which weaken and disfigure our society in this country, is impurity and the violation of this heart principle taught by Christ.

When we take into account those divorces which are granted for open violations of the statute against adultery and those many more which are granted for "incompatibility" and for other fictitious reasons, but which in reality are granted for impurity, we have named the sad cause of a very bad consequence. Indeed, this subject of our loose marriage bonds and loose marriage laws is becoming one which gives pause to our complacency and moral conceit.

We are ashamed and astonished to learn that in New England more divorces are granted annually, in proportion to the size of the population, than in any other country on the globe. The overthrow of the Roman family was the overthrow of Rome, and while we do not immediately fear any such sad consequence for our own loved land, yet it behooves sane and thinking men to realize the importance of the peril and the transcendent importance of the remedy which is suggested in the teaching of him who spake as never man spake. One thing this passage brings before

our minds most clearly: We are sometimes inclined to ask, What is worth while? The answer given to that question in the words of our Master is, It is worth while to live for the family and for the home. Home is the cradle in which have been rocked the bravest, the best, the most worthy of earth's sons and daughters; home is the schoolroom in which man can learn those principles which best preserve and those practices which best promote the beautiful, the true and the good in all life; home is the altar at which respect, reverence, worship and religion are earliest and truest inculcated; home is that quiet spot from which we set forth to brave the seas and storms of life; no more inspiring, restraining or comforting influence can accompany life's wayfarer on life's way than the memory of a pure and pleasant home. Home is that port towards which all the faithful are steering; it is the type of heaven, the jewel of earth, the mountain of strength, the quiet valley of pleasure, the sweetest word in our language, the most potent, beneficent influence in our lives.

No worthier, nobler work can a mortal aspire to than to be the builder of a true home — that place “where each member loves the other and where all love God”; and no home can be truly founded unless it rest on such a purity of heart

and spirit as our Savior here seeks to inculcate.

“This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.”

CHAPTER VI

LIVE A TRUTHFUL LIFE

Matt. v, 33-37

WHO has not heard a person express his surprise that an explicit command against lying is not contained in the two tables of the Mosaic law?

As well might one exclaim because the solar spectrum does not appear in a ray of light, until it is broken into its component parts. The colors are the light. There is no ray of light without the seven colors, and there is no commandment without the truth.

The table of the ten words, reduced to its ultimate analysis, is but one commandment: Thou shalt be true; true to thy God, true to thy neighbor, and true to thyself.

But there are always some literalists who ask for the explicit precept instead of the implicit principle; for these there are many commands against lying in Scripture, but none more far-reaching, none more authoritative, none more distinct and binding than the words spoken here by our Master, "Let your speech be, Yea, yea;

Nay, nay."

Christ begins his exposition of this subject by adverting to the practice of the ancients of Israel. He calls their attention to the law recorded in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, and sums up the import of that law in the words, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself."

The practice of oath taking among the ancients was common and prevalent. Their oaths were so many and so varied, so lightly regarded that the people had lost sight of the original meaning of the practice. "Their number was endless; men swore by heaven, by the earth, by the sun, by the prophets, by the temple, by Jerusalem, by the altar, by the wood used for it, by the sacrifices, by the temple vessels, by their own heads."¹ "The garrulous, exaggerating, crafty Jew needed to be checked, rather than helped, in his untruthfulness, but the guardians of the purity of the law had invented endless oaths, with minute discriminations, and verbal shades and catches, which did not expressly name God, or the temple, or the altar, and these, the people might use, without scruple, mock oaths, harmless to themselves and of no binding force!" So common had they become that their daily conversation was interlarded with these adjurations

¹ "The Life of Christ," by Geikie.

and asseverations.

It is to this foolish custom and harmful practice of the people that Jesus makes direct reference when he calls their attention to the futility and emptiness of the practice — and makes plain to them that it is utter folly and unwisdom. “Thou shalt not swear,” says Christ, “by the heaven, for it is the throne of God,” etc. Such oaths, says the Master, lend neither weight nor strength nor certainty to your utterance, for all of these things are beyond your authority, influence or control. What authority have you in the heavens — it is the throne of God. What rule have you in the earth — or what do you determine on His footstool? So much are you creatures of dependence and so subject are you to the fixed order of things, that you cannot of yourselves make one hair of your head white or black. Therefore, do not be foolish, and do not talk without meaning. To deck your talk with oaths is to reveal yourself a simpleton.

But what did this practice of oath taking evidence? Was it not the clearest proof of the prevalence of untruth and lying? An honest man does not need to take an oath that what he says is true; and a liar only colors a deeper dye his lie, by his oath. The common practice among the Jews showed this to be a fact. Truth

was made to be untruth. That which is simple is made to be double; a distinction is made where no difference exists. An untruth is an untruth, whether it is sworn to or merely affirmed.

The distinction between perjury and falsehood, and the different degrees and binding qualities of oaths, simply declared that a man was permitted to speak falsely, without guilt, if he were not bound by an oath. In other words, lying is permissible, and the way for it is smoothed and made ready by the technicalities and connivance of the law.

The first evil result is that darkness is made to be light, lying is not lying, if there be no oath. The second result of such fine distinctions is that lying under oath is not lying, except the oath be of a sufficiently sacred or terrifying an order. The total result is that lying is fostered and nurtured, and truth is strangled by the meaningless distinction of the doctors of the law.

Truth is slain by the letter of the law, and lying is hedged from attack by the protection of the law. Consequently there is a moral confusion within the man, and the entire life is weakened by the subtle poison.

We are amused at these practices and distinctions of the Jews, ancient and modern, and at the ingenuity in lying prevalent in the Oriental

nations of to-day. We condemn and condemn them, but the fair question arises, "Are we not guilty of a like practice with them, differing in form but akin in spirit?"

Is there not a like condition of affairs among ourselves, to-day? Take the world of modern business operations, and while the great substructure is formed of truth and honesty else the business world could not endure, yet in detail there are many departures from the straight and narrow way. The law of common honesty and of simple truth does not apply as largely in business to-day and in this country as we might wish it did; and when it is applied, far too often it obtains because, "Honesty is the best policy"; applied because it is a policy rather than a principle, which, from the standpoint of Christ's religion, means that it is not applied at all.

The legal maxim of "*caveat emptor*," "let the buyer beware or be on his guard," is of far wider necessity of application than ever was intended when it was established in law, and with the subtlety and refinements of its application lawyers are only too familiar.

Lies are told in calico and in wool, in leather and in groceries, in china and in wood every day of the business life. Many are the sellers who will give you less goods or poorer goods, if they

can be sure to escape a lawsuit, or if they are in no peril of infringing the letter of the statute. The phrases, "I warrant" or "I guarantee," which formerly had a definite meaning, with certain sellers to-day mean nothing more than a form of words to fill up the moment of conversation while the customer is deliberating a purchase.

Take that great field of enterprise, modern "fake" advertisements. Just think if one could take the statements of the advertisements for truth, what an inestimable boon would have lighted upon this earth. If the goods set forth in these red-letter advertisements did what they claim to do, no short man but what would become tall — no tall man but what could be made short, no bald heads but what could be covered with a luxurious growth; deafness, blindness, dumbness, would have vanished; rheumatism, cancer, consumption and all the ills to which flesh is heir would have disappeared; every poor man would be made rich, every homely woman would become suddenly beautiful, and the day of the millennium would be at hand. But what are the facts? No one who reads these personal advertisements ever dreams that they are literally true; no one who writes these personal advertisements ever imagines that the reader will think them to be true. The reader knows that he is reading a perversion, a

misrepresentation, an artistic lie, and the only question in his mind is not how much of this is false, but in the very last analysis, what is the remotest possibility of a grain of truth in the entire glowing statement.

One thing is surely evidenced from this realm of reflection, and that is that to-day, our "yea" is by no means "yea," nor our "nay," "nay"; and that the sacred principle of the truth is far too lightly regarded. It is true that these are what are termed "fake" advertisements; it is likewise true that there is a movement on foot among honorable business men, to purge the pages of advertisement — and we rejoice to see this movement.

But the very existence of such a movement is paramount evidence of its need and proof positive of the prevalence of lying advertisements.

May the day speedily come, when newspaper and magazine editors shall clearly see that truth is not only the best policy, but the only abiding principle by which to test the advertisements they shall print, and the only sure foundation on which to build a confidence among their patrons and readers.

Even the practice of taking an oath in court and the distinction between perjury and non-perjury is a relic of barbarism, and evidences the

world's need of the very counsel and command which the Master is here giving.

Now turn, if you will, to that command which Christ gives, "Let your yea be yea and your nay, nay," and is not the common, wide-spread attitude of the world toward the truth tried and condemned by this simple law? These words, in the largest interpretation, are not a command against perjury, nor against profanity, though each of these may be made to come under the law, but they are against untruth in the inward parts — in the mind and heart and spirit. The untrue spirit may reveal itself in the thought, may express itself in the word, may manifest itself in the deed. You might correct the word, align the thought, make the deed to conform to a given standard, and yet have the spirit still untrue. As in the other instances of the new law previously adverted to, so here, the Master does not give a negative command but a positive principle — which runs, "Live the true life."

The children of God ought to be true, because they are God's children and God is true.

That God is true is everywhere evidenced, where there is any manifestation of God. Without being true He cannot be God. God's truth is evidenced in the earth which He has created and which bears the impress of His being. He is true

in the stars, true in the forces and processes of nature — the laws of science are possible only because He is true. If God were not true there could be no science, no knowledge and no safety in living. As this is the manifestation of His being in the world, so this is the revelation of His character in the Word. This is the Scripture testimony concerning God, “He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” He is spoken of as “God that cannot lie.” And Plato has poetically expressed this fact in the words, “Truth is his body and light is his shadow.” Those who bear His spiritual image and are His spiritual children, should be like Him in this, that they are true.

Moreover, the children of God should speak the truth. Greenleaf, in his work on Evidence, quoting from Reid’s “Inquiry into the Human Mind,” shows, “That the Author of Nature, who intended that we should be social creatures, and that we should receive a great part of our knowledge from others, hath implanted two principles in our natures, that tally with each other.”² “The first of these principles is a propensity to speak the truth and to use the signs of language,

² *Vid.* “A Treatise on the Law of Evidence,” by Simon Greenleaf, Part I: Chap. III.

so as to convey our real sentiments." This may be termed the principle of veracity.

In other words, truth is in accordance with our nature and lying is a doing violence to our natures. Children by nature speak the truth, and it is only after experience and under temptation that they turn to lying. We have by nature an instinct for the truth and though "there may be temptations to falsehood, which would be too strong for the natural principle of veracity, unaided by principles of honor or virtue; yet where there is no such temptation we speak truth by instinct; and this instinct is the principle I have been explaining."

Moreover, our author continues, "there is within us, implanted by the Supreme Being, a disposition to confide in the veracity of others, and to believe what they tell us — this may be called the principle of credulity." Children, by nature, believe that what is told them is the truth — witness with what readiness they receive and believe in the statements concerning Santa Claus, the fairies or any other impossible or imaginable beings.

Without this principle of credulity — without this predisposition to belief in what is told to us, there could be no such thing as the progress of knowledge in the world, and our own individual experience would be the limit of our knowledge.

Credulity, moreover, is a gift of nature and not the result of reasoning or experience; it is the strongest in childhood and weakens only through experience and the disappointing contact with a deceiving world. The above statements, while not verbatim, are yet substantially taken from Dr. Reid's remarks quoted in Greenleaf.

This presents before our minds the iniquity of lying. Lying is one of the most subtle and potent evils which can assail human society. It is doing violence to our natural instincts; it is out of the order of things. It is the greater evil because of the difficulty of its detection. A thief can be traced, a murderer can be discovered, but the liar leaves no trail in the air. What has not a lie accomplished? It has defamed characters, disrupted households, created wars, overthrown thrones, perverted religion and kindled the fires of hell.

The lie is evil again, because of its evil associations. The lie seldom travels singly. Says O. W. Holmes, "The devil hath many tools but a lie is a handle that will fit them all." It is the handmaid of every other kind of vice, the evil helper of every form of iniquity. The murderer and the thief are primarily liars. The principle of lying is back of murder, which is denying the truth that another has the same right to live as I

have. The thief is in principle a liar, because he denies that to be another's which he hath taken.

Lying is a great evil because of its propagating powers. Lies multiply like guinea pigs by the dozens. That man who thinks he can go free with one little lie, does not understand the nature of lying. The man who seeks to use the lie as his servant, is seldom free until himself becomes the slave. No man can become the master of the lie.

Lying is a great evil to humanity because of its pervasiveness. There is no form of social relation into which it will not thrust its sneaking face; there is no relation too sacred for it to respect. There are the "white lies" of society; the "black lies" of commerce; the "gilt lies" of diplomatic relations; the "glorified lies" for the supposed sake of religion, illustrated most aptly by Job's comforters; the "party lies" as Addison terms them for political purposes; of these latter Addison remarks, that some persons seem to think that if the iniquity of the lie can be distributed over the many it loses something of the personal sin, not realizing that a drop of ink can discolor and pollute a considerable body of pure water.

The lie is a great evil because it deceives the liar. That definition of the lie, attributed to the

Sunday-school scholar and illustrating a too common opinion of the use of the lie —“ a lie is an abomination unto the Lord and a very present help in trouble ”—is false, absolutely false. The lie is a broken reed upon which to lean at any time; it is a saving from present trouble by signing a contract for a future trouble; it is paying a present bill by giving a worthless note for a larger sum. And how foolish is the practice of parents to lead and invite their little children to flee to the false protection of a lie, under threat of punishment, for telling the truth! “ Did you break that vase? If you did you shall be sorely punished for it. Now tell me the truth.” The child moves naturally along the line of the least peril, and “ did not break the vase,” but frightfully shatters the truth.

Lying is an evil to be dreaded, because it makes a dupe and a slave of the liar. A liar must continue to lie. Few habits are more easily acquired — none more hardly broken. Frequent lying leads to habitual lying; habitual lying, to unconscious lying, until the liar arrives at that point where he cannot know the truth though he would; where he cannot distinguish between the concepts of his lying imagination and the recollections of his memory. Iago the subtle, artistic liar is a case in point. So frequently, so skillfully, so per-

sistently did he falsely defame the character of Desdemona, that wise critics have reached the conclusion that at the end Iago himself believed those accusations to be true which at the outset he knew to be false. If Shakespeare painted this character thus, it only shows us that he understood the full peril and deceivableness of lying.

But, to change abruptly from the darkness of lying to the white light of truth, the closing words of this passage set before us the sublime and simple freedom of the truth. THERE IS SURELY MORE TRUTH THAN FALSEHOOD IN SOCIETY, ELSE THE WORLD COULD NOT EXIST. The words of Carlyle concerning the religion of Mahomet are here apposite. "A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! If he do not know and follow truly the properties of mortar, burnt clay and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish heap — it will fall straightway." The fact that there are great business houses, large commercial enterprises, banking systems, and a world of business conducted on credit, says plainer than any words can — that men live and love the truth. Were it not that where the lie abounds the truth much more abounds, society itself would cease to exist.

It is well for us to realize the peril of the lie

and the traitorous spirit of that false friend who through misrepresentation of being helpful would gain entrance into the city of Man-Soul, for its betrayal and destruction. It is right for us, likewise, to be aware that truth is mighty and must prevail. We must admire the honest man — the man of truth, whenever or wherever we find him.

In the *Life of T. H. Huxley*, written by his son, there are no words that more truly grip the heart of the reader and kindle his admiration, no words which more tersely and truly picture in miniature the subject of the sketch, than those words taken from a letter written by Huxley to his son Leonard. "I know well that ninety-nine out of a hundred of my fellows would call me atheist, infidel, and all the other usual hard names." . . . "But I cannot help it, one thing people shall not call me with justice and that is — a liar." Huxley loved the truth, lived the truth, worshiped the truth, and we believe that it was his devotion to the truth, coupled with his abhorrence and utter dread of believing or teaching that which he did not know to be absolutely true, that kept his path on the plane of the material, and made him fearful of trusting himself, in those regions where the eye could not see, the ear could not hear and the sense could not test, the facts of knowledge. While we may not agree

with him in his position, it is a poor soul that cannot admire his rich possession — and bow with respect and honor to a man who tried to be true. This simple, strong text, “Let your yea be yea and your nay, nay,” is a call of the Master to all noble minds to cultivate the truth, such truth as is here indicated, truth of mind and spirit — truth in the inward parts. For on the truth rests a man’s knowledge, his morality, his religion — his manhood, his usefulness to his fellows and his acceptance with God.

Blessed are the true in heart for they shall see and know THE TRUTH.

CHAPTER VII

LIVE A LARGE LIFE

Matt. v, 38-42

THERE are no "little things" in this earth which God has made. I sometimes wonder whether one, properly speaking, can refer to anything in this earth as a "little thing," speaking not as to mass, weight and appearance, but as to place, function and importance. In this vast material system there are the mountains, the seas, the oceans, the spheres, but there are also the drops of water, the insects and the microscopic creatures — and the student of the microscope informs us that it would almost seem as though the Creator had bestowed the greater thought and attention on those creatures which we term little than on those which we term great.

The Constitution of Nature, scientifically considered, is the constitution of "little things," for all that we see, know, or can know in the world of matter is the arrangement and rearrangement, the laws which govern and control molecules, which you or I cannot see, and atoms which it tires us to think about. If we would get an idea of the

minuteness of an atom, a recent illustration of Lord Kelvin will help us to do so. Said he, "Raise a drop of water to the size of the earth and raise an atom in the same proportion, and the atom will then be in some place between the size of a marble and a cricket ball." Along this same line of thought Professor Brashear of Lehigh University makes this comparison: "If you fill a tiny vessel of one centimeter cube with hydrogen corpuscles, or electrons, you can place therein, in round numbers, five hundred and twenty-five octillions of them. If these corpuscles are allowed to run out of the vessel at the rate of one thousand a second it will require seventeen quintillions of years to empty it." And yet the Creator has thought of the atom and the corpuscle and has given it its place, function and work. At all events there are no unimportant things in this earth; and the Creator has regard for the one as for the other. There are no "little things" in the economy of God. He regards kings and princes, potentates and great personages; but likewise the poor, the sick, the aged, the infirm and the child are his. The Father has consideration of one as of the other.

There are no little, unimportant things in that life which Jesus teaches us is worth living. His religion takes into account the great principles of

eternity, but also the small practices of our daily lives. The large decisions, the mountains of truth, receive his notice, but also the daily, humble, apparently insignificant deed, word and thought have our attention called to them.

The spirit, to which our earnest thought is directed in his present words, is great, grand, kingly, Godlike — Live a large life, a life of love, forbearance, forgiveness and patience. The instances in which we are directed to do this are little, petty, insignificant, matters of expedience, prudence and mere good manners. Because this is the method of his teaching, is it not all the more true to the facts and experiences of life? Live a large life is the grand theme, among the common trivialities of the common day is the illustration of the theme.

At the outset the Master calls our attention to that law which had been received from Moses, that law which had regulated the custom, practice and habit of the people for centuries, that law which was supposed to have the warrant of authority, and the endorsement of God Himself. It is recorded in Exodus XXI, 23-25, "And if mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." This law is known through all

times and in all jurisprudence as the "lex talionis," the law of retaliation, recompense and revenge. And this is a law which is exceedingly congenial to human nature, because it accords so perfectly with the impulses of nature. It is a law which springs unbidden to regulate the conduct of man. We find the root of it deeper than the nature of man, even in the nature of the brute. Snarl at a dog, make a threatening gesture at a dog, and the result is that he will show you his teeth, and stand ready to act upon the "lex talionis." You are, let us say, sitting in your study, reading or writing, suddenly from the nursery below issue sounds of conflict, blows are heard to fall, cries agitate the slumbering air, and the sound of weeping strikes upon your ear. With the instinct of natural judgeship you leave your quiet work and descend to "hear the cause." Is it not usually stated thus: "He did it to me and I did it to him"? Remarks by the court of a moral nature. "It don't make any difference; he had no right to hit me, and I only did to him just what he did to me." The case is concluded according to the wisdom or the unwisdom of the court, but the principle of "lex talionis" has been illustrated again for the millioneth time in the world of childhood. And as this is a primitive law, manifesting itself in the childhood of every

man, so has it ever been manifested in the childhood of the race.

I presume that in almost every nation illustrations of the "lex talionis" can be found, but I believe that nowhere can we find a better, nor an earlier illustration of this law, than in that remarkable Code of Khammurabbi which has in recent years come to light. This is the oldest legal code in existence; it dates from 2300 B. C., a thousand years before Moses, and illustrates to us the character of a civilization contemporary with that of Abraham's day. In this code the "lex talionis" appears prominently. We give but a few of the more plain instances of it. The ideal of punishment is one that shall balance the crime, and be like the crime in kind and degree. "If one destroys the eye of a free-born man, his eye shall one destroy."¹ "If any one breaks the limb of a free-born man, his limb one shall break." "If a builder has built a house for some one and has not made his work firm, and if the house he built has fallen and has killed the owner of the house, that builder shall be put to death." If the house falls and kills the owner's son — the son of the builder is to be killed. If a slave is killed by the falling house, a slave must

¹ "The Code of Khammurabbi"—Historians' History of the World, Vol. I, p. 498.

be given to the owner of the house. If a doctor treats a slave, cutting him with a bronze lancet and the slave dies, the doctor must give the owner another slave. Thus runs the law of like for like, in the childhood of the race.

This "lex talionis" was also a theory among the Greeks, not practiced perhaps in their laws, but appearing in their view of the divine government. They believed that in the order of Providence the one who committed a sin against his brother should suffer as penalty that same wrong done by another to him. The one who stole should suffer through being stolen from. The man who lied should be deceived by lies. Inhumanity would beget inhumanity. This latter is illustrated by the old story of the father who, when his son was maltreating him by dragging him by the hair of the head through the streets of the city, cried out, when they had reached the forum, "Drag me no further, for I only dragged my father to the forum."

We have already seen that this "lex talionis" is one of the written laws of the Mosaic legislation. Now while this law was to be enforced by the legally constituted authorities, and in this respect was better than the application of the law by the individual himself, because less liable to abuse, yet in this law the RIGHT of retaliation is

recognized and the spirit of retaliation is inculcated. Therefore the literal man concludes, I have the law back of my desire, and I HAVE A RIGHT TO MY RIGHTS. It is against this principle, against this spirit, against this maxim, so commonly heard — I have a right to my rights — that Jesus opposes a better principle, and illustrates it by several instances and in four fields of application. The principle which he sets at the head of his discussion is DO NOT OPPOSE EVIL WITH EVIL.

The first illustration which he offers where this principle will apply is in our contact with the passionate man. Now it is very clear that a man has the right to life and his bodily safety — the passionate man is the man who would rob you of this right, and would injure you in your body and person. How irritating, exasperating, provoking is such a man. This human pepper-box, this animate volcano, this troublesome sore on the body of society! Who can avoid him? Who is not fated to meet him, sometime, somewhere? Now in the home, again in the street, to-day in our business transactions, to-morrow in the sanctity of the church. And wherever you meet him he is ever the same; the man of unmodified conceit, of overbearing manner, of limitless selfishness, of irritating self-importance. Always he must be

approached with slippered feet and with gentle words lest he burst out into a passion and take up arms against his nearest neighbor, and smite him on the cheek. The natural effect of this man's attitude, of his temper and of his act, is to provoke the military and warlike spirit that lurks within every man. We have the desire to meet violence with violence, and to treat this form of human distemper homeopathically.

This is the spirit, this the temptation, the Master would restrain. Says he, "Meet not such an one with an evil spirit, but oppose his evil, and ungoverned soul, with a restrained and governed spirit."

Let a man examine this rule and he must see that the Master is not counseling cowardice and a craven spirit. The man who has the spirit of Christ is the man of real courage; he is one who can endure, bear, take punishment; he is the man of self-mastery — far better, far braver, far nobler than the other. He is the man who illustrates the wisest of the wise man's proverbs, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."² Such an one is the real commander of the situation, and must have the heart, courage and self-control of the brave man who

² Prov. xvi, 32.

would tame a wild beast. This is but a practical application of the irrefutable principle that, "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." As a principle this is true; it calls for wisdom in its application, like every other principle, and the wise man will realize that sometimes the way to peace is through war.

A second right plainly recognized as belonging to man is his right to his own property. There be those who would deny this right, sometimes forcibly, but more often under color of law. It is the price which one pays for living in gregarious relations, that one must meet this kind of man — the litigious man, the man who would deprive you of your estate, or who seems to find delight in worrying and putting you to endless annoyance in the keeping of that which is yours. This kind of a man is avaricious, inconsiderate, cruel, troublesome. It is painful to live near him. It is a supreme test of character to encounter him. He is the kind of human weed, which spreads broadcast the seeds of discontent, strife, bitterness, bad-feeling and hatred. Do you respect him? Do others respect him? Would you be like him?

You see the evil manifested in him — therefore avoid becoming like him. How? Jesus tells us in this fortieth verse. Remember that

personality is worth more than things. Remember that power is worth more than property, and good is worth more than "goods." The litigious man may get the "goods," but Jesus directs how you may get "the good." What are you seeking? What is your aim in life? Is it character, is it to be, rather than to possess? Then here is your opportunity for real enrichment. The Master's counsel in this fortieth verse is not only sound religion but it is sound prudence and common sense, as experience hath so often verified, and as we shall briefly exhibit later.

A third right of man, approved in reason and recognized in our national constitution, is the right to liberty. The right to be the arbiter of his own destiny, the right to be the determiner of his own goal. The right to go if he would go, and to refrain from going if he would not go. But one does not travel far in this world before he meets with the overbearing man. The man who has such a realization of his own rights, such a confidence in his own judgment and opinions, that he fails to recognize the right, judgment and opinion of any other mortal. This kind of a human insect you meet most frequently in public and crowded places. He infests hotels, ferry-boats, cars and any place where the people gather together, and wherever you find him you find him

asserting himself, elbowing his way through the crowd and seeking to compel the many to go the way of the one. Now it is perfectly possible and perfectly competent for you to accept his challenge, to make a row, to insist on your rights, to urge your vote, to subscribe your veto to the unreasonable will of such a man. It is competent, but, says the Master, it is not worth while so to do. Yield the technicality of your right, leave the worthless victory to the little man covered with the tin medals, the rewards of his braggadocio, and go your calm and peaceful way, conscious that you have gained a great battle over self, and aware of the approval of every great and good spirit in the universe. This is the kind of man of whom Oliver Wendell Holmes writes, in his "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table": "The qualities which tend to make me hate the man himself are such as I am so much disposed to pity, that, except under immediate aggravation, I feel kindly enough to the worst of them. It is such a sad thing to be born a sneaking fellow, so much worse than to inherit a hump-back or a couple of club-feet, that I sometimes feel as if we ought to love the crippled souls, if I may use this expression, with a certain tenderness which we need not waste on noble natures. One who is born with such a congenital incapacity that nothing

can make a gentleman of him is entitled, not to our wrath, but to our profoundest sympathy."

The last class to which the Master refers, as persons who interfere with our rights and privileges, are those who tend to injure you in your kindness and charity. I like the way in which this is put — it is a man's *right* to give, it is a rich privilege to him to be charitable, nothing will make him a larger or happier man than the exercise of these graces. But how many become discouraged and disheartened in their charity and giving, by being continually accosted by the asker and continually defrauded by the 'borrower. There are leeches and lamprey eels in the animal world, there are parasites in the vegetable world, and there are those in the world of men and women who are professional frauds and blood-suckers, who never laboring yet desire to eat, who never giving yet desire to get, who live by their ignoble and graceless cheek, and who laugh at you and me for being easy marks for their false and pathetic appeals. Now, many a liberal soul and many a charitably minded man has allowed this class of person to rob him of that which is worth more than his golden trash, even of his generous heart. Many a man has said, "I have been 'taken in' so often, deceived so frequently, that I am resolved never to give to any man or any

cause again." To such a hasty and unwise resolve the Master here says, "Don't!" Keep your spirit of liberality; do not allow it to be destroyed; exercise that same breadth of judgment in your giving, that you do in your business, you cannot always make a profit on every transaction, bear with gracious fortitude these provoking losses, and never permit these grasping and thieving parasites of society to steal from you the right to live the large, blessed and happy life of liberality.

Now if we have carefully observed, while the Master has been talking, we have seen that the purpose of this principle, of not resisting evil with evil but of meeting the evil with good, is for the sake of the man practicing it. This is where the first returns are to be seen, in the self. It is not for the sake of the violent, nor the litigious, nor the overbearing man, that you are to observe this law, but to keep *you* from being like them. The Master is teaching his disciples, giving counsel to his children. Such a disposition, such a life, victorious in "little things," will make you a commander, a master, a hero, a truly great man. The man who can look beyond the immediate moment, past the present annoyance, over the head of the little fellow who stands insisting on his rights, is a truly great man, living a large life.

But a second good result follows: nothing will more promote the kingdom of heaven than such living as is here indicated. What becomes of quarrels with only one party to fight? What of law-suits over coats, if the other party says, "Here, take my cloak also"? Given this spirit and the case is settled out of court. What happens to the joy of victory of the overbearing man when the other says, "Why certainly, two miles if you choose"? Why, all the joy and spice is gone for the mean spirit of the insistent man, and he is far more likely to yield a foot or two more of the sidewalk to the one whom he thinks is crowding him.

Observe: so great and pervasive is the religion of Jesus Christ that it leavens the trivialities of daily life. How greatly would the home be improved if there were less insistence on "my rights" and "thy rights." How would business be made more pleasant and more profitable, if there were no litigious employers and no overbearing clerks! How the church would be beautified and glorified, if each in honor preferred the other. Observe: the man who has a spirit of this kind must find roses along life's path, the fruit of his gentle sowing. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Fire feeds fire; hate breeds hate;

kindness begets kindness; and love reflects love. In the Rose Garden (Gulistan) by Sa'di we read this incident, "I was seated in a vessel, along with some persons of distinction, when a boat sunk astern of us and two brothers were drawn into the whirlpool. One of our gentlemen called to the pilot, saying, 'Save those two drowning men and I will give you a hundred dinars!' The pilot went and rescued one of them, but the other perished. I observed, 'That man's time was come, therefore you were tardy in assisting him and alert in saving this other.' The pilot smiled and replied, 'What you say is the essence of inevitable necessity; yet was my zeal more hearty in rescuing this one because on an occasion when I was tired in the desert he set me on a camel; whereas, when a boy, I had received a horse-whipping from that other.' God Almighty was all justice and equity: whoever labored unto good experienced good in himself; and he who toiled unto evil experienced evil."

It is a fact hard for us to believe, that not he who has had injustice done him but he who does injustice is the most injured.

Yet some one may say, "These principles are impossible and impracticable." How do you know? There has never been but One who has perfectly tried this way; he it is who counsels this

way for us. Says Lessing, "The Christian religion has been tried for eighteen centuries, and the religion of Christ remains to be tried." This is the religion of Christ. Try it!

CHAPTER VIII

LIVE THE PERFECT LIFE

Matt. v, 43-48

IN the past four divisions of this great discourse Jesus has been treating of a morality worth practicing. In this exhibition he has made plain to his hearers that the religion which he taught was truly ethical.

So emphatically is morality insisted upon that, did we separate this part of the discourse from its context, one might conclude that religion is only morality. Yet we find that the morality which he prescribed is not a mechanical conformity to a fixed norm but the natural fruit of a right spirit — the emphasis being laid on the life which is within, rather than the life which is without, and thus marking for us the true relation of religion to morality.

The morality which he taught, while based on the profoundest principles, yet extends to the veriest commonplaces of life. In these four divisions referred to Jesus had made plain that we ought to live a peaceable life — free from heart-hate; we ought to live a pure life — free from

heart-lust; we ought to live a true life — in word and act and thought; and we ought to live a large life — above the insistent application of “my rights.”

Thus inductively has the Master led us up to the heart of morality and the spirit of right living, which is *love*.

The stage in the discourse we have now reached is, therefore, the summing up of that which has gone before and the introduction to that righteousness worth attaining of which he is about to speak.

In other words, LOVE is the central point in his discourse, as it should be the central point in life; it is pivotal in one as in the other; it is that vital, focal point where morality meets and merges into religion. Love is that great law of the Scriptures, for the determination of a man's right relation to his fellows and a man's right relation to his God. Given such a love in the life as is here pictured, and the man stands in the proper relation to God and to his brethren. Love, therefore, is the spring of all true morality and love is the only foundation of perfect righteousness. In short, it is the presence, power and guidance of love that makes the perfect man.

The perfect life, which is now to be the theme of the Master's teaching, is presented to his

hearers in striking contrast to the imperfect life, which is the life of the world. We find that imperfect life evidenced and authorized in the imperfect law of Moses. In Deuteronomy the twenty-third chapter and the sixth and seventh verses we read, "Thou shalt not seek their (the Moabite's and Ammonite's) peace nor their good, all thy days forever." "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother."

In other words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." This was the law of the Jews, and this law exhibits the practice of the Jews in their relations to the various peoples with whom they came into contact. In this particular respect the Jews were not superior to the other nations of antiquity — for that which was practiced by the Jews in their relations was likewise practiced by the other nations in their relations to the Jews.

This loyalty to friends and hostility to enemies characterizes, in a general way, the law of love as it was written before the coming of Christ.

Among the ancients the bonds of friendship were very strong, and the principle of loyalty to tribe, clan or nation was to a degree binding. That man was an outcast and an unworthy citizen, who played the traitor to a brother, a friend or to one to whom he had given the tokens of

friendship, illustrated in the ancient practice of "eating salt" with a man. But that man was likewise a traitor to family, tribe or nation, who showed kindness, or did good, to another, the acknowledged enemy of tribe or family. The custom of holding the family responsible for the crime of the individual, of demanding reparation from the family for the wrong doing of one of its members; and likewise the duty of taking vengeance and of seeking reparation for a wrong done to any member of the tribe or family illustrates both the solidarity of the family and tribal life, and the prevalence of the law that "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy."

This law, so potent and so prevalent in the early days, still survives among all nations at the present day in the form of the commonly known legal fiction, that when a nation is at war with another nation, every member of the nation is an enemy of that other nation and vice versa.

The word "barbarian," with its familiar meaning of uncivilized or half savage, is a positive though small relic of the narrow spirit of nationalism, and the limited spirit of charity of an earlier day. Among the Greeks "a barbarian" meant one who was not a Greek, among the Romans it meant one who was not a Roman, among the Italians it referred to all who were not Italians. As

one has said, "It is remarkable that we always call a rival civilization savage; the Chinese call us barbarians, and we call them barbarians." "The Middle Ages were a rival civilization, based upon moral science, to ours based upon physical science. Most modern historians have abused this great civilization for being barbarous."¹

This is not literally true at the present day, and the reason for the change we shall consider later, but it was true with the utmost literalism in a former day.

In one word, while the old morality taught that it was a virtue to be a good lover, it taught with equal insistence and authority, that it was an equal virtue to be a "good hater."

This law of loving one's friends and hating the enemy likewise represented the spirit of the best religion of a former day. David was a character, tender, gentle, sympathetic and spiritual, loyal and true to his friends — but hating his enemies with a like zeal, devotion and singleness of purpose. Some of the imprecatory Psalms illustrate to a nicety, with what an ideal compliance David observed the law of Moses, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." This spirit of hatred to

¹ "Bookman's Biography of Thomas Carlyle," by G. K. Chesterton, J. E. Hodder Williams.

the enemy has been strongly characteristic of all religious differences in all times of history. The Spanish Inquisition was simply a systematized propaganda for punishing and exterminating those who were regarded as the enemies of the church, and therefore the enemies of mankind. In liberal and enlightened England during the reigns of James and Charles, when religious loyalty was so devoted and religious hostility so bitter, the adherent of either religious party, which at that time frequently coincided with the political party, was the bitter enemy of the other party, so that it came to pass that house was divided against house, husband against wife, children against their parents.

Now the way of life prescribed and produced by this law that "hath been written of old," can surely be called an imperfect way, because it resulted in such imperfect living. We believe that we have reached that point in civilization when we can surely affirm that a state of war is a state of society to be deprecated and deplored. But the observance of this old law resulted in a continual state of war of larger or lesser proportions. In England the Hundred Years' War, and the Thirty Years' War were the fruit of this law, and there has never been a religious war which was not the product of "loving our friends and hating our

enemies.” This is the life, and this is the law which fosters such a life, that Jesus categorically rebukes, condemns and repeals. “But I say unto you,” are the words with which he introduces the new law of perfection. And the law which the Master enacts and which ever is associated with his divine life and his divine works, is the great law of love.

The law of love here referred to is a law to the reason and the will of a free moral agent. The love spoken of is not a matter of sentiment — it does not refer to instinctive affection, to impulsive and natural devotion, as the love of the parent for the child. Such a law, commanding a son to love his mother, in the sense of having a natural affection and right sentiment for her, would be a superfluity and an absurdity. Such a love is already furnished by nature and so there is no need for such a command. This would be a superfluous law, as much as the command, “Thou shalt eat or thou shalt breathe.” Again, instinctive affection and natural devotion is not the object of this law because to command such a thing would be an impossibility. To command the operation of instinctive, impulsive, natural functions and sentiments is beyond the pale of command, because it is beyond the pale of volition. Jesus is not here commanding either the absurd or the impossible.

In this very passage the Master illustrates to us what he here means by the "Thou shalt love thine enemy."

At this point we eschew theories, speculations and philosophical abstractions to confine our attention to what the Master concretely shows the law of love to be. The words in which the law are couched is, "Love your enemies." This is simply Christ's striking, forceful way of putting the law. The point to be emphasized in the new law of love must be contrasted with the point avoided in the old law of love and therefore the stress is laid on "the enemies"; these being the particular objects of the love of the will because they are not the natural objects of the love of the affection. He then proceeds to show the content and method of application of this law.

Such love as he here inculcates, will include, first, maintaining a right attitude of action toward them — expressing itself in good deeds. "Do good to them that hate you" is the way this is expressed in the parallel passage in Luke's Gospel.

Let us suppose that a person has done you an injury from which you have suffered in body, mind or estate; now the opportunity arrives when you have the chance to express yourself toward the enemy, when, in other words, to use the common

phrase, you can "get even." The Master here says "get even" by doing good to him who hath done evil to you. If we should paraphrase and expand the law it might read something as follows: It is a man's highest duty not to do anything to interfere with another working out his own highest destiny. It is further a man's highest duty to do everything he can to help another toward the fulfillment of his highest destiny. What that other man has done to you has nothing to do with your obligation or obedience to this law.

The law does not mean that you are to have a natural affection for him, it does not mean that you are to "divinely dote" upon him, but it does mean that you are to deal with him justly, even according to the law of love. Such a practical love as that is perfectly feasible — if we will, and the matter rests within the power of the will; therefore its obedience is commanded.

Secondly, the law of love says, as recorded in Luke, that we are to "bless them that curse you." That is, we are to keep the heart from assuming a hostile attitude toward another. This is a step in advance, perhaps a more difficult field of application of the law. One thing we know is this, that the attitude of a man's heart and mind largely influences the attitude of his life. In other words,

we are very much what we think ourselves to be, and things are very much what we think them to be.

We are now in the very familiar region, so prominently before us at the present day, of the influence of the mental over the material world. While we would not go into the intricacies of the subject, yet there is broad truth in the underlying principles. Choose a thing and you will like it; refuse a thing and you will loathe it; set yourself adversely toward a person and you will dislike him; set yourself favorably toward a person and you will find him more tolerable. The Master here directs us to have that benign, favorable, happy attitude toward even our enemies, as would be indicated in the phrase "bless them." And such an attitude is practicable and lies within the power of the will. This was the attitude of heart that David had against his declared enemy Shimei, who stood cursing the king as the old man went forth from Jerusalem, a fugitive. David's adherents bade him to act according to the old law and to permit them to cross over and take off Shimei's head; but David's spirit was humble that day, he was traveling near to God, and so he did according to the new law of love — there was no rancor in his heart, no bitterness in his spirit; he would not harm his enemy when he could, and he

returned blessing for cursing. David towered above himself that day, majestic, strong, Christ-like; this law of love molds perfect men.

But, still further, Jesus illustrates what it means practically to love your enemies, he advances a step more — we must maintain the right attitude of spirit toward them. “Pray for them that despitefully use you.” This means to do justice to your enemy before the Throne of Grace; it means not only not to hinder him, not to harm him, but to help him as you best can. And this too lies within the power of the man who will. Thus men have done and thus men can do. Jesus prayed for his persecutors, while they were nailing him to the cross, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Thus have many martyrs since that time prayed for those who were despitefully using them. This was the attitude of the spirit of Louis XVI and his Queen, Marie Antoinette, when they were imprisoned, insulted, maltreated, persecuted by the mad mob of French fanatics, to the eternal glory of these royal spirits and to the eternal shame of the French nation. These were the noble words, revealing the nobler spirit of the suffering queen, “Every suspicion that either the King or myself feel the least resentment for what happened must be avoided; it is not the people who are guilty, and even if it

were they would always obtain pardon and forgetfulness of their errors from us." ² This, therefore, is the perfect law of the perfect life as illustrated in the concrete teachings of the Christ.

The perfect life is further impressed upon our minds by a consideration of its motive and pattern. We are to observe this perfect law that we may be the sons of our Father which is in heaven.

In other words, this is the echo of the psalmist's estimate of man as "Little less than divine" and the forerunner of the apostle John's estimate of man, "Now are we the sons of God." Man is being trained for companionship with God. There can be no true companionship, friendship or fellowship where the persons have not something in common. For a complete fellowship the artist seeks the man of artistic taste and appreciation; the musician finds a responsive chord in those who love music; the *littérateur* finds companionship in the lover of books; the man of morals and religion is at home among the moral and religious. So God is training His children in His way, after His law, that they may be able to enjoy Him forever. Christ here teaches us that God's way of dealing with mankind, even with those who are hostile and hateful, is the way of

² "Marie Antoinette and the Downfall of Royalty," Imbert De Saint Amand, p. 222.

love. His goodness is shown to all, in food and raiment, and breath and life, and all good things. The man who curses God receives from God the breath with which he curses, and Judas is in the college of the apostles. Suppose that God did the way of the world; suppose He made the limited law of love His law, loving His friends and hating His enemies. Some think that thus He ought to do — some that thus He does. There are those that marvel that the blasphemer is not struck dead in the midst of his blasphemies; Job's counselors considered that it was only the impious and the wicked that were afflicted.

There are those to-day who stand ever ready to account for a catastrophe or a cataclysm of nature as a judgment of God on a wicked city, or a wicked country. And James and John were ready to call down the fire of heaven upon Samaria because it would not listen to the words of the Christ. But the Master says to one and all of these classes, to James and John, to Job's counselors, and all pious accusers, "Ye know not of what manner of spirit ye are of." God's law of love is the law of love Christ came to propound and to prove. Had God so done, did God so do, after the manner of the law of love as promulgated and practiced by men, who would merit His kindness? Who would be alive to-day? Who

then would be saved? Nay, it is his divine observance of the divine law — it is because He is love that He is dear to us. This it is that hath won our hearts; this it is that hath broken our wills; this it is that hath humbled our pride, this it is that hath begotten our love for Him. And it is this law of Love that shall finally draw all men unto Him.

But suppose that we still act according to the world's law of love — then the Master shows us what will be the consequence. Says Jesus, "Who does as the world, is as the world." Can that man who does as the publicans, as the nations, as most people do, be any better than these? Then how can the world be made better? How can man himself become better? How can we call ourselves the sons of God, if we do only as the sons of the world?

The end and purpose of the perfect law of love is exhibited finally by the command to live the perfect life. In this high end we have revealed an estimate of man's dignity and man's divinity. No one ever charges a cat with being immoral, because the cat is without the pale of morals and the moral law does not apply to the cat. You would not demand of a child knowledge of solid geometry, nor would you expect an Andaman Islander to be familiar with the technique of music.

Little is required of these because they are capable of little. But to whom much is given of him much is demanded; and conversely when it comes to the commands of God which are always reasonable, when high demands are made of man it evidences his capability of high attainments. As ability entails responsibility, so responsibility evidences ability.

In this high end intended by the perfect law of love we have the promise of the great possibility within man. The law, and the pattern, and the command seem to be revolutionary, ultra, impossible. But it is not impossible, for God never asks the impossible. It is difficult, for God ever asks the difficult. It is not impossible for God lends His help for its fulfillment; as we shall see in a later chapter, this is the realm where the injunction, "Seek, ask, knock," obtains. It is not impossible, for men have made it, and men are making it real in their actual life to-day. This law is the very heart of charities and philanthropies; it is the gentle cause of the humanities in so inhuman an art as war; it is the root from which hath grown the idea of brotherhood; it is the bond which is drawing together the nations of the earth; it is the cure which is working the abolition of feuds.

Moreover, in these words of Christ, "Ye shall

be perfect even as," etc., we have revealed a prophecy concerning the destiny of man. While one has rightly said, that "truth in the sense of the absolute justice is a thing for which fools look in history and wise men in the Day of Judgment," yet in these words of promise of our Master we have not the stuff for the making of dreams but the solid foundation of principle on which we can build the certain expectation of the coming of a day when the law of love having wrought its perfecting work, man shall show justice to man, in his right attitude of deed, heart and spirit. We have here the vision of a place and of a time when the law of love shall be the law of that land. In these hopeful words of the Master we hear sounded the keynote of that harmonious anthem, which shall usher in the dawn of the second creation, as the singing of the morning stars together and the shouting of the sons of God made music at the creation of the heavens and the earth. The end therefore of this royal law is man's perfection, completeness and entirety. The power is that Spirit of peace, of truth and of love that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

CHAPTER IX

LIVE THE CHARITABLE LIFE

Matt. vi, 1-4

WE have now finished that section of the Master's curriculum wherein he has taught his learners concerning that morality worth practicing. In the foregoing words he has laid the foundations of a sound society, and erected the fingerposts pointing the way to a happy and strong manhood. His regard up to this moment has been chiefly concerning our relations to our fellow men. He has in a broad way pointed out how it is possible for a man to dwell in right relations to his neighbor. Now a step in advance is taken — the subject progresses to a higher level; the leading idea underlying each of the three following sections is a man's relation to "the Father." The Father is brought to the fore, and mentioned prominently in each of these sections. While not leaving the realm of a higher morality, yet our study now advances to that branch of human thought which men commonly denominate religion, and our teacher's purpose here is to show especially how a man may live

in a right relation to God.

The first great thought presented under this subject is, a man must live a charitable life. The common view of giving differs from the view presented in these words of the Master. I believe we are not far astray when we say that men commonly regard giving as a work of grace and not of debt; a work of supererogation, something extra, something by way of addition, something which may be practiced or not according to the will of the man himself — something not a necessity of a spiritual religion.

And this view, it seems to me, is evidenced by the world's approach of the giver. Cautiously, gently, apologetically, with slippered-feet and with silver tongue let a man approach that one from whom he would solicit a contribution for any charitable or religious work. This is a subject from which the phrase "you ought" must be excluded. A man's pocket-book and property are his own to do with as he pleases, and to refuse to give to anything is the privilege of the world. This is further evidenced by the world's opinion of the giver. As a people we regard giving as something worthy of extra praise and credit. A man may be moral and escape the notice of the papers, he may be religious and escape publicity, he may be honest and it will not be widely noticed

until we read his obituary, but let him be largely charitable and his name will be heralded in every penny sheet. Why is this, unless the charitable man be an exception, or unless charity be something of unusual merit? To say of a woman she is pure is tantamount to an insult; to say she is honest is a doubtful compliment; to say of her she is generous and charitable is to say that which does not displease her and which gratifies her friends. A man must be honest; he must be just to have the respect of his fellows; he ought to be religious, but he *may* be charitable.

Nor can we deny that ordinarily the giver has a good opinion of himself. That spirit which actuated the Pharisee when he stood up in the temple to pray, and which led him to say, "I give tithes of all I possess," is by no means absent from our common estimate of ourselves.

These things are so, we believe, because the practice of charity and giving has not been assigned its true and rightful position in the great obligations of our lives. The true view of giving is brought before our minds in the words of our Master spoken to his disciples on the Mount, and set at the head of this chapter. Giving is a necessity of right living. That man does not rightly live who does not truly give. This is shown by the opening words of our Lord.

“Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them,” are the words with which he begins this part of his discourse. Righteousness — or man’s right relation to his God, is the general theme. “Therefore when thou doest thine alms,” is the particular inference from the general theme. Almsgiving, charity, therefore, is a first element of acceptable righteousness, and without giving a man cannot be pleasing to his God. In one brief word — there are three ways in which a man may be acceptable to God — these are adduced and elaborated successively.

Charity is the first, prayer is the second and self-denial is the third. These forms of elemental righteousness the Pharisee himself recognized, for he says, “I give,” “I pray,” and “I fast,” and no man can even pretend to live in a right relation to his heavenly Father unless he observes these three principles of a right life.

A moment’s thought will reveal to a true man why he ought to give. While men differ in rank, station and talent; while they occupy unequal levels, and enjoy unequal privileges; yet it is true that of one blood made He all the nations of the earth, and men have a common lot and live a common life. The great law of love, which the Master has given as the norm for the guidance of

the conduct of all God's family, says to man in no unmistakable terms, that he shall share his strength, his time, his talent, his food, his riches, with that other less gifted and more needy than himself. How more plainly could this truth be expressed than it is in the words of the Apostle of Love in his letter to "his little children" in I John iii, 17, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." If we love God, we shall love those who are God's children, and if we love not God's children better than we love our goods we are none of His.

Christ's first teaching to his learners is that they are to be of use and service in this world, and how can a man be of real use save as he giveth of himself for the service of the world? We are to be God-like; how can a man be more God-like than to resemble in liberality and charity the Giver of every good gift and of every perfect giving? That man who pretends to be religious, but who does not give, has not truly fulfilled the first principle of the simplest religious life. I come more and more to believe that the pocket-book is a trustworthy test of the reality and genuineness of

a man's religion. It is easy to say, "I believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world"; to declare that the Gospel ought to be preached to every creature; to magnify and laud the transforming and enlightening power of the Word. But the practical question is, How much do you believe it? Do you believe it to the extent of parting with dollars and cents for the support of the Gospel, the spread of the Word, the feeding and giving to drink to the needy ones of earth? — then you believe it in deed and in truth. Do you believe it only to the giving of pious utterances and Pharisaic speeches, then you believe neither in deed nor in truth. The man who gave two cents to the last mission collection does not believe very sincerely in missions, howsoever much he may prate about them.

Giving has not the place in our lives that it ought to have according to the teaching of our Lord. It does not occupy the place in our business budget, in our estimates of expenses, that it was intended to occupy. If God's people gave in anything like a proportionate ratio to their privilege and to their ability, the church to-day would be spared much of that humiliation of appeal to which she is subjected, and would no longer be regarded as a "begging institution." And observe here, an appeal does not make an obli-

gation; it merely exhibits it — the obligation exists before the appeal is made. Giving is an obligation which no follower of the religion of Christ will want to escape. Giving is one of the greatest means of Christian grace. I am persuaded that that man who gives freely, gives gladly, gives as an act of worship to God, and as a God-like privilege which he may exercise in helpfulness towards God's children, is one to whom the heart of God goes out, upon whom the love and peace of God abideth, one whose charity covers a multitude of sins. The man who does not give, does not love God.

How can a man ever be like God and not give, for God is the great, bounteous, willing Giver. What are we that He has not made us? What have we that He has not given to us? Who lives in this world lives in a house which God hath given to him; daily we sit at His table and partake of that abundance which He hath supplied; our eyes are feasted upon the beauties of field and sky and sea; our minds rejoice in the powers with which He hath equipped us; our hearts sing and our lives laugh because He in his giving hath made it possible. And what have we to hope for in the ages to come but the bounty of His beneficence and the eternal riches of His love?

We hear much mention made in Scripture —

especially in the Old Testament — of “God’s poor,” and there are some who are wont to look with a kind of calm complacency and a condescending compassion on “God’s poor,” as though they were a class by themselves, and with whom we had no vital connection. But who are God’s poor? Let us pause a moment to inquire. In the experience of my imagination, a while ago I encountered two of those commonly called “God’s poor,” sitting at the corner of Twenty-third Street and Sixth Avenue, New York. I had seen these two old men there many times, I became interested in them, gradually got acquainted with them, and was eventually invited to visit the rooms where they lodged. It was at the close of a summer’s day that I walked home with them to their unattractive quarters on the East Side. The evening was close and hot and their surroundings seemed anything but inviting, yet I was interested in the conversation, for they had had a particularly successful day, and so the externalities of their life were more bearable to me than they might otherwise have been. These men were beggars, not by choice but by necessity; they had lived past their time, physical debility and the taking away of those upon whom they might have been naturally dependent compelled them to sit with extended hand waiting the charity of those

whose hearts moved them to give. They told me much of their lives that would be irrelevant here, but to-night they were glad of heart for one had made two dollars and the other something over four that day, and the world for the moment seemed "very good." As I came away from their rooms I speculated on what I had seen. The question arose in my mind, which is the more needy, the poorer, which is the greater beggar, which is the more dependent, the more indebted, the man who had received the two dollars or the one who had received the four dollars? Obviously the answer was that the man who had received the most was the most indebted, the most dependent, and the greater beggar of the two, if there be degrees in such a state. But I passed this same corner another time, and glancing as I passed to see if my acquaintances, the old men, were there, I saw that they were not in their accustomed places that day, but alongside of the spot they were wont to occupy an automobile was drawn up to the curb. What a beautiful thing this great touring car was; what a contrast it and its richly garbed occupants made to the two squalid old men who usually sat there to beg! The incident was all the more interesting to me because I knew the family to whom the car belonged; I knew how their money was gotten; it

was inherited from their father, and not a member of his family had done a serious day's work in his life, to the best of my knowledge. But where did the father get all these riches? From mines in California? And who put the gold into the mines? Certainly it was none other than God.

Thus my mind ran on in this idle yet half logical way, and I saw the problem so clearly as I had never seen it before. Then I applied the same test-question I had put to the condition of the old men. The old men were commonly called beggars, "God's poor"; these who stood in their places to-day were termed rich, independent. And yet in this instance was not the right answer the same that had been made before? Was it not true that those who had received most were most indebted, those who had been helped most were most dependent? And I concluded, if there are any degrees in the matter, that the rich man is the most indebted, the most dependent; the real poor is the one who has been most helped by God. In short, we are all tenants of the tenement of God; we are all dependents on the bounty of the great Giver, and there is not a man but who must hold out his hat to the Almighty.

The principle of giving is ingrained into the

very constitution of things. "Give and it shall be given unto you," is the witnessing of every well-stored garden, the testimony of every bursting barn. The tiniest flower that blooms, had we eyes to see it, in the course of its short life teaches us that it lives not for itself alone, but it, too, must contribute of its vital seed for the adorning and beautifying of this fair earth. Man on his physical side recognizes the essential truth of the principle of giving; behold the athlete, with his symmetrical, strong body, with his lithe limbs and gnarled muscles; ask him whence he got his strength and he will tell you by giving his strength. Even the business world recognizes the ultimate truth of the principle, and teaches its disciples that money is saved not by hoarding it but by investing it. In the world spiritual the more a man spends, the more he saves; the more he gives, the more he gets. Over all this vast creation which bears the impress of the generous God is written that principle of charity, which he that hath eyes to see may see, and which the wise man of olden day has expressed in words that are everlastingly true. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

However, in this present teaching of our Mas-

ter the emphasis is not laid on the necessity of giving; that is assumed; it is taken for granted that a man who would be pleasing to God shall give, and our Teacher's chief thought is turned to the method of giving. "Therefore when thou doest thine alms," says Jesus, do it in a way that is pleasing to your heavenly Father. Should we ask what manner of giving is pleasing to God, we receive our answer: in the manner in which God is constantly giving. Secretly, silently, unostentatiously is the method of God's giving. So secretly and silently does He give that many men to-day do not recognize that their lives and all that support and make possible their lives is the gift of God.

How crude and dull of mind and heart we are, to declare that God's sustenance of the Children of Israel in the wilderness of Zin in the olden time is miraculous and not to see that God's support and sustenance of all His children in every time and in the wilderness of the world is equally miraculous! Because we do not see a visible hand of God filled with the food for our tables, because God gives us our fruit and our grain through the broad hand of the well-filled bough, and the tiny hand of the stalk of wheat, we do not rightly recognize the gift of food from our heavenly Father. And yet this is the character-

izing mark of all of God's gifts. The very manner of giving shows it to be from God. Light is the gift of God — necessary to all life; without light, no life; and yet did you ever note how the light comes? Quietly, gradually, stealthily, unobtrusively it dawns, and God's day is about us. God's great gift of light vivifies us. So did God give His unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ — in the darkness, in the night, in a tiny spot of earth, in a rockhewn cave, as a little child, thus came God's greatest gift to man. So comes that good gift of His own Spirit, which He is more ready to give to us than we are to give good gifts to our children, quietly, gently, softly as the dew upon the grass, we cannot tell whence he cometh, we cannot always tell when he cometh, but we only know that he is here. The day of Pentecost was by no means a type of the normal manner of the coming of the Spirit. The manner of his coming at Pentecost was as much a departure from the normal manner of his coming as was the resurrection of Jesus an abnormality in the realm of physical death. And this is the method of all God's giving.

As our heavenly Father giveth, so ought we to give, for we are to be like Him in this, and this is the teaching of our Savior. Therefore, says Jesus, "When thou doest thine alms," do

not do them showily, noisily, with a sound of trumpets and a publication of the fact of your liberality, but give so quietly that "your left hand knoweth not what your right hand giveth." Worship God in your giving "in secret." Giving is a spiritual act, an act of worship, and so a matter unseen, hidden, not for the applause of men but for the sake of your Father.

I recollect to have seen in the little town of Witney, England, one of the most refreshing instances of this humble and hidden method of giving. There is there situated a charitable institution of some sort; the building is of stone and of goodly proportions, representing an outlay of a large sum of money. Across the front of it, carven in letters of stone there is this inscription, "Give God the Praise." There is no mention of the name of the donor, no word of praise of his gift. The purpose of that gift, it seemed to me, was plain — for the praise of God; the method of it was perfect, and that building stands to-day a silent act of worship in stone to the Almighty and an abiding testimony to the right method of giving. Giving, according to Christ's teaching, is primarily an act of worship, a thing that is to be done for the sake of the Father, and therefore ought to be done in the way that is acceptable to the Father, and not for

the praise or approval of men.

Then the Master further assigns a practical reason for giving after this manner. Those who give to be seen of men receive their reward; "they have their reward." It is a reward that is visible, temporal and unsatisfactory. They are seen of men, they are to-day noted in the papers. They have the satisfaction of having their charity and generosity commented upon, and not infrequently criticised and minimized. They receive their degrees and titles as a reward for their charities, and when they have received them, what are they worth? In other words, giving as an earthly and material investment is not worth while; it does not bring in the returns that one might expect, as the heart-disappointment of many a charitable man has proven. For those who give after this earthly, imperfect manner, have no reward from God; no spiritual satisfaction; no inner blessing; no future prospect of recognition by the Father; nothing, to resort to a commercial figure, on heaven's ledger to their credit. But those who give as an act of worship; those who give unostentatiously, in secret, and for the sake of God, have the assurance that God sees their gift, God approves their gift, God recognizes the giver and God will recompense them openly.

In that last judgment scene, recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where the nations are gathered before the Lord for his approval or disapproval, the grace that sets those at his right hand is the grace of charity. And how beautiful is the kind of giving that is there pictured; those who are there termed the righteous are those who gave to the necessity of their fellows, and those who in their giving gave so simply, so naturally, so in accord with the Master's teaching that they had forgotten that they had given, and were unaware that they had ministered unto the wants of their needy brethren, until the Lord himself awakened them with the sweet surprise, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." Surely there is no more spiritual grace than the grace of giving; no more acceptable act of worship than the act of giving; and I am persuaded, on the authority of Scripture and on the authority of the Master's own words, that it is charity and charity of this kind that shall cover a multitude of sins.

CHAPTER X

LIVE THE PRAYERFUL LIFE

Matt. vi, 5-15

IT had indeed been a strange thing if Jesus had taught his disciples nothing concerning prayer. It would have been beyond explanation if one whose religion was the very essence of spirituality, one who lived in such close and intimate touch with the invisible and heavenly world, one who dwelt in such perfect harmony with God that he could say, "I and my Father are one," one whose life was the visible expression of the power of prayer, the perfect exemplification of the life of prayer — we say it would have been inexplicable if this one had not taught his disciples and the world something on the subject of prayer. In this passage now before us we have the Master's teaching on this important theme.

That he speaks at this time on the theme of prayer is not by chance nor is this subject illogically related to the subject of giving, which he has just explained. The theme of charity and alms-giving follows directly and logically from what the Teacher has said concerning the perfect

life and the law of love. There he has taught us that we are to be the children of our heavenly Father, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust"; in other words, as God is a giver, so are we to be givers, and the theme of liberality and charity is born of the root of love. After like manner the matter of prayer follows with a logical propriety after a consideration of the theme of giving, for prayer in its broadest, deepest aspect rests on and rises from a realization of man's utter dependence on the gifts of God, and in its most elemental form prayer is the making known of our wants to God, and its chief mark in this stage of its development is petition. That petition is a division of prayer all works and all authorities on the subject clearly maintain.

That prayer is the making known our wants, the asking for those things which we need, is clearly evidenced by a consideration of prayer as it is commonly practiced; the child idea of prayer is that it is a means by which we get what we ask for, and many a life has never gotten beyond this true, though primal and incomplete, idea of prayer. This is a danger, that prayer shall be considered merely as a want bureau, and a spiritual exercise shall be made to promote our selfishness. At all events, the fact that God supplies

our every need is closely connected with the thought that we have a right to make known our needs unto God — and giving and praying are related subjects.

But prayer is something more than the act of making known our wants to God — out of this same truth of God's giving and our heavenly Father's provision for our entire life, rises the next idea of prayer, that it is a grateful recognition of those many gifts and perfect givings that have already come from Him. The element of thanksgiving enters into true prayer — and the grateful heart here has a means of exercising the true and proper sentiment of gratitude. But prayer in a still higher aspect is an act of worship. It is the means by which the spirit of man comes into touch with the Spirit of God. It is the communion of the spiritual with the spiritual; the intercourse of earthly person with the heavenly Person; it is the way of praise, glory, exaltation, aspiration; it is the breath of the soul, the wings of the spirit, the secret stairway to power, the one exercise enjoyed in common between the dwellers on this earth and the inhabitants of the heavenly places. It is the highest act of which the mortal spirit is capable; it is the acceptable worship of God; it is the true practice of righteousness, and under this head of the "doing of

righteousness " the Master here refers to prayer.

Prayer in all its forms, whether of petition, supplication, thanksgiving or worship is a necessity of the human soul. This is clearly shown from a consideration of the universality of the practice of prayer. The record of the most spiritual peoples given in the Bible and the records of the most material and carnal peoples given in the histories of the world, are one in witnessing to this fact, that men pray to the Power that is without them, the God that is above them, in all nations and at all times. Even back of the evidence of the fact seems to lie the explanation of the fact — prayer is an instinct of the soul. It is a pouring out of the soul in the presence of a stronger and wiser than can be found among the sons of men, thus giving vent to that ineradicable appetite of the soul, the desire for confession. It is a lifting up of the spirit of man toward that which is highest and best in the universe, thus giving the most perfect exercise to that divinity which stirs within us, that larger self which dwells within this narrow house, whose cry for the upper air, whose call for the larger life, we term aspiration.

But prayer is further a privilege which the good God has vouchsafed to the children of men. It is the present evidence within our very hearts

that when He completed the world, He did not cast it off into space to spin its course alone and unattended. Prayer is that golden touch which binds the earth to the footstool of its Maker; it is the ladder of communication between the human creature and his Creator; it is the access of the subject to the King of kings and the Lord of lords; it is the door of that room where dwelleth the Father, open at all times to the entrance of the Father's little children.

But prayer is still more than this; it is a religious culture, the best and the truest that man can practice. In prayer we glorify His wisdom and power; in prayer we recall His goodness; in prayer we meditate upon His mercy; in prayer we recognize the reality and have the proof of His forgiveness and favor; in prayer every attribute, quality and manifestation of God may be rightly recalled and dwelt upon, not now from a theological or controversial standpoint, but from a spiritual and practical side, and thus prayer maintains and inculcates a vivid sense of the reality and nearness of God, and impresses upon our minds and lives a true picture of His glory, character and being. Thus prayer is the best culture of the soul.

Therefore, since prayer is of the nature and of the use that we have here briefly seen it to

be, since it is a practice ingrained in our natures, commanded in Scripture implicitly and explicitly, it is not strange that our Master devotes so large a part of this short discourse to a teaching concerning prayer; it would have been passing strange had he not done so.

As in the former section, that concerning giving, so here, the emphasis is not laid on the fact of the practice, but on the manner of it. The fact that men will and ought to pray is taken for granted, as the words "and when thou prayest" signify, but that when men pray they should pray as God would have them pray is the object of the Master's teaching in this passage. And so in the first section of this teaching he tells us what prayer ought not to be. The first warning he gives as to prayer is that prayer is not to be ostentatious but "in secret." A prayer that is right and acceptable with God does not depend upon posture, elegance or aptness of expression, inventiveness of thought or form, but upon the simple and genuine outpouring of the spirit of man in the presence of the Spirit of God. There is need for warning just at this point, for though a man may come to that high thought of prayer that it is a means of worship of God, yet one can discover in himself and see in the history of public prayer the peril that naturally arises at this point. Men

are prone to confound the substance with the form, to feel that if the form is correct the fact itself is correct, and so to lay the emphasis at the wrong place in the practice of prayer. In other words, that man who in his prayers prays to be seen of men, approved by the cultured, endorsed by the educated, rather than to give expression of his simple soul in a simple way to God, is the man who has missed the central idea of prayer. Prayer is a concern between an individual and his God. It is an attitude of soul rather than an attitude of body. And a man might repeat the most rhetorical and perfectly worded prayer that was ever constructed, and yet utter a prayer that reaches no higher from earth than the ears of that audience before whom and for whom the prayer is primarily given. Such a prayer is a prayer to an audience and not a prayer to God. Such was the prayer characterized in a Boston paper as "the most eloquent prayer ever delivered to a Boston audience." The weakness of ostentatious prayer is that a man will not be true to himself nor to his God. It was because he knew that others were hearing him, and he was praying for their ears rather than for the ear of God, that the Pharisee uttered that bombastic and boastful prayer in the temple.

The secret, private, individual, spiritual char-

acter of true prayer is most markedly emphasized in the words of our Lord. He says, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." This most clearly exhibits the inner character of prayer; it is an opening of the heart and mind to God. This is a moment when a man must be utterly forgetful of appearances — this is a time when a man must be eminently truthful, sincere, simple. This is the phase of prayer illustrated in David's words when he says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any way of grief or pain within me, and lead me in the way which is everlasting."

The words of our Lord simply emphasize the honest and secret character of the truest form of prayer. They do not inveigh against public prayer, for this must be the characteristic of even public prayer; for the individual, such prayer is really "in secret," and a matter between each soul and his God, and therefore no minister can pray for a people, or with a people, unless the people are with him in thought and spirit while he prays. If they are wool-gathering, or dreaming of their business, or wandering here and there in their thoughts during the prayer, as well have a machine turn out the prayers as a man, as far as the

individual is concerned. Yet while these words of Christ do not teach against the practice of public prayer, it does seem that they do bear the meaning that prayer in private is more excellent, and more to be preferred as a means of worshiping God, as He would have us, than is public prayer. That man who practices prayer in secret is safe in his spiritual life. As one has said, "A man never backslides on his knees." At all events, our Master lays the emphasis most strongly on the thought that prayer is secret, individual, spiritual and an act of worship.

Again, says our Teacher, in your prayer be not repetitious but in earnest. In other words, he teaches that there is no virtue in the mere saying over of prayers. This calls a positive halt to a common mistake of mankind. There is an element of superstition in every man, and there ever has been a tendency to tie the worth of a religious practice to the form of that practice. In other words, men are continually in danger of making religion external and formal. Among the Chinese we see a clear illustration of this failing of mankind right in point; these people, feeling that prayer to their deity is good and that much prayer is better, have constructed ingenious machines containing rolls on which are written properly worded and rightly approved prayers; these

machines are placed in a stream of running water and so the prayer is rolled on and on while water runs. It is beyond explanation strange that an intelligent being could imagine that an Intelligent Being could be moved or praised by such a mechanical worship. But we need not go to heathen countries for illustration of this mistaken view of prayer; right in our own midst we have those who "think that they shall be heard for their much speaking," and who roll out "Pater Nosters" and "Ave Marias" day and night, with the mechanical regularity and the unintelligent worship of a Chinese prayer-wheel. It is against all forms of mechanical and formal worship of God that Jesus directs these words on prayer — in every line of this great discourse he teaches us that the worship and service of God must be in spirit and in truth; that the spirit of the worship is of the first importance and that the form is everywhere of secondary importance. He here plainly says that there is a distinction to be made between saying one's prayers and praying.

But his teaching on even this subject is spiritual and in principle and must be so interpreted. There is no vice in the repetition of petition and request if these be in earnest and if the heart of the one who prays wings them on their upward way.

There come moments in the life, states of mind, crises in the experience, depths of helplessness and need, when all that the soul can do is to cry again and again the call for help; moments when the very repetition is the best evidence of the earnestness of the one who prays. Such a moment came to the Master himself in the Garden of Gethsemane when three times and in the identical words he prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Such a prayer is not a contradiction, but an illustration of the deeper meaning of Christ's teaching, that our prayers must not be repetitious but in earnest.

Again our Master says, in substance, let not your praying be superstitious but intelligent. True prayer is not a mechanical process but an intelligent communion; I presume that prayer in its best expression is the most perfect manifestation of which the human intellect is capable. Its acceptableness and efficacy are not tied to place, form, person nor material thing of any sort; it is the most spiritual reality with which mankind is familiar. While this is true, it does not negative the related truth that periodic and frequent prayer is desirable, for one may come to his knees periodically with a hunger and thirst after God, as one comes to the table periodically with a

hunger and thirst after material aliment. And in the one case as in the other, strength, calm, patience, power, is the reward of the true and periodic coming. And yet there is a sense, and our experiences have made us familiar with it, in which stated, periodic prayer may foster the superstitious idea. "If you don't say your prayer at night something will happen to you," is a teaching, akin to fetichism rather than spirituality.

Jesus teaches in the simple and beautiful words of the eighth verse of this chapter that prayer is the intelligent communion between the Parent and the child. In most simple form this truth reads — God knows our needs before we know them ourselves, and better than we know them ourselves, yet He likes to have us ask Him for things we need, He likes to have His children talk with Him about their lives. Was there ever any truth more comforting than this, more uplifting, ennobling, more inspiring, more encouraging a mortal man to the practice of frequent prayer?

What is more gratifying and gladdening to the parent's heart than to have his child come to him at the close of the day, to have his child lay open the things, the secret things of his life, to talk it all over with father or mother? Does this not reveal a trust in the parent, a confidence, a love, a right relation of the life and the heart

of the child to the parent? God asks for just this in His children, and no more, for there is nothing higher or better for which to ask. And what can be more helpful to the child than to have and to exercise just this privilege — of confession, communion and conference with a good parent? After such a meeting the child goes away, stronger, happier, brighter, better, and love has known its best expression. This is the privilege and this is the blessing which the child of God is offered in prayer — the right to talk it over with his heavenly Father, and from the exercise of such a divine right a man goes away stronger, happier, brighter, better, and love has had its most perfect expression. I hold it to be true that no better illustration can be found of God's close and tender relations to His children than those figures of our Lord wherein he likens the heavenly Father's relation to His children to the right relation of a good father to a loving child. And how often Christ uses this figure!

Thus, in these opening words, our Lord teaches his disciples how they ought to pray — and having taught them this he turns to the equally important subject of what they ought to pray for — in this they are likewise in need of teaching. It is not our purpose here to give a treatise on the Lord's Prayer; this has been done

often and well by others; we would simply indicate what seems to us to be the main import, the underlying purpose, of this pattern prayer which the Lord taught his disciples. First, this prayer contains a suggestion as to the form of prayer. We observe that the Lord's Prayer is simple in its spirit and diction; direct and straightforward in its utterance, free from all fulsomeness, void of all cant; it is the honest, simple utterance of a simple, honest soul. We remark again its brevity, short sentences, thoughts tersely put, a perfect example of his own dictum; be not repetitious; and lastly it reveals an order in its construction; an order of importance, treating first of the things of God and then of the things of man; an order of excellence in the things of man, beginning with the material and ascending into the spiritual; and, finally, it reaches a climax, returning in the perfect circle to that theme with which it began, "for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen."

We have termed this the Pattern Prayer, and such it is and such was its purpose. Not that this is the only prayer which his disciples are to use; the spirit of true prayer is free and it must ever be left to the individual to determine his own form of prayer, if prayer is to be what it was intended to be — the free expression of the

soul of the individual. But Jesus knew our need of teaching in this matter, the disciples realized their need of teaching and so asked, "Lord, teach us to pray"; and our Teacher implies the purpose of this prayer in the words, "After this manner therefore pray ye." In other words, the underlying thought of this Pattern Prayer is not pray for those things that ye want, but learn to pray for those things that ye ought to want; and thus shall the right training in prayer beget the right spirit in want.

I believe we may truly say that Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane gives evidence of this blessed result of right prayer, for in the very act of praying his spirit and desire are brought perfectly to coincide with what his Father wills for him.

First then our Pattern Prayer teaches us that we are to pray for the coming of God's kingdom, and this is based on the major teaching of the religion of Christ, "Seek first the kingdom of God," etc. Nor is a man to be unintelligent and contradictory in this petition; let him not pray for it unless he also works for it. It is an absurdity for a man to pray for what he does not want. "Thy kingdom come" is not a pious utterance but a practical petition. Secondly, we are to pray for our physical necessities. This petition bears a relation to the former petition, but

it comes in the second place and is of secondary importance. In this prayer we see that our natural desire is warrantable, our natural requests are permissible. Next, we are to make known and ask help in our moral necessities; that is, help that we may fulfill Christ's teachings and observe the right relation to our brethren. The right relation to them is included in the meaning of love — an essential expression of love is forgiveness. This is the only petition in this prayer to which a limitation is plainly expressed; this limitation our Lord later emphasizes and explains, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." This clause in this prayer one needs to dwell upon, think over; in a measure the answer to prayer depends upon the man himself. Our greatest debt to God is our debt to our fellows. Then we are to pray for our spiritual interests; to realize our absolute dependence upon God; to trust Him; to be fully aware that because His is the kingdom, His the power, and His the glory forever, no prayer that is ever uttered by a sincere heart, in a simple way, by a child-like spirit, shall ever fail of an adequate and perfect answer.

The hour of secret prayer, of prayer after this

spirit and after this manner, was the source of the power and glory in the life of our Lord; the secret which opens this door of privilege, power and blessing, our Lord communicates to his disciples and to us in these heavenly teachings we have just considered.

CHAPTER XI

LIVE THE SELF-DENYING LIFE

Matt. vi, 16-18

IT is not improbable that fasting arose originally from necessity. In primitive civilization, in the early ages, when men were dependent for their sustenance upon the free products of the soil or on the precarious fortunes of the chase, the occasions would not infrequently occur when abstinence was a necessity. In those days, when men lived near to nature's heart and the interpretation of nature's ways was the interpretation of the will of a super-human being, it is not unnatural to suppose that those who of necessity must fast saw in it something of a will above that of man. So, in a way, the fast was the will of the gods.

Add to this the fact that in times of distress, sorrow, agitation or anxiety one's appetite naturally wanes and there is no desire for food. This was the frequent experience of men. By a simple and natural interchange of terms, as when one was in humiliation or sorrow he fasted, so when he fasted it was an evidence of sorrow and contrition. In this way "abstinence, which

seemed imposed by Providence, if not in expiation of guilt, yet as an accompaniment of sorrow, easily became regarded as a religious duty when voluntarily prolonged or assumed, and grew to be considered as an efficacious means for appeasing the divine wrath, and restoring prosperity and peace.”¹ Now when such a fast was carried on to a degree, the practitioner, from the reduced vitality consequent upon lack of sufficient nourishment, and from the increased nervous susceptibility, would be liable to visions, hallucinations, vagaries of the imagination. These would be interpreted as revelations of the gods, marks of approval, and so fasting would be both a consequence and a cause of these divine apparitions. In some such way as this fasting came to be associated with religious ceremony and worship. At all events, whatever the origin, from the earliest times and among all peoples, fasting has been a common religious practice.

The probability is that it was practiced among the Assyrians and Babylonians. Among the Greeks the regulations of the Orphic societies, as early as the seventh century B. C., “demanded total abstinence from meat and beans, and subsequently the highest rites in the Eleusinian mys-

¹ McClintock and Strong and New International Encyclopedia, *in loco*.

teries were preceded by a day of fasting.”²

While fasting does not seem to have been common among the Egyptians, yet in the mysteries of Isis and Osiris it was practiced. Among the Romans also it was a practice at their festivals, and in later times before initiation into their secret societies. It is found in Persia and India — it is a rule of Brahmanism and Buddhism — it was observed among the Aztecs and Toltecs of Mexico. The aborigines of America followed the custom, and the Indians of the West, in the ceremonies of the Sun Dance, still preserve the custom. The Mohammedans fast and the Roman Catholic church to-day still has its stated times of abstaining from food.

It is to this religious practice which has been so general and so widely accepted that Christ turns our attention in this part of his discourse.

If we advert to the history of the Jews we find that fasting was practiced by them as by the other nations. In the earlier times of the nation, fasting followed the natural inclination, was spontaneous and not regulated by law. Previous to the Exile, the only fast statedly observed seems to have been that of the Great Day of the Atonement. But after the exile, when there came that revival of the ceremonies of religion days of pub-

² International Encyclopedia, *in loco*.

lic fasting were inaugurated. Then there were four fasts in the year, in the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months — each of these commemorating some sad and calamitous event in the nation's history.

The Pharisees, as one might predict, strict followers of form, excellers in outward righteousness, added to these general fasts the personal custom of fasting twice in the week, on Mondays and Thursdays, and it is for this work of supererogation that the Pharisee of Christ's parable proudly thanks his God.

Jesus dwelt among a people who practiced fasting, and here and in one other place in the Gospels he refers to the practice. It is interesting and instructive for us to study the attitude of the Master toward this matter.

He does not wholly condemn but he interprets and regulates the practice. Combine this passage in Matt. vi, 16-18 with that other recorded in Matt. ix, 14-17, and those passages in Mark and Luke parallel to this, and we have substantially the Master's teaching on the subject of fasting.

From the question of John's disciples, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" we can readily and safely infer that Jesus himself did

not fast, as a form, neither did he teach his disciples so to do. Nor is this statement inconsistent with the references to Christ's fast of forty days, and his utterance, "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting"; these but bear out and verify his teachings in this connection. Jesus says fasting is good if it be not a mere form but a genuine expression of the heart and life.

Fasting is a natural expression of sorrow, agitation and deep emotion. Thus David could not eat while the life of his beloved child hung in the balance (II Sam. xii, 16), and Paul was without food or drink three days after the stirring experience of his sudden conversion (Acts ix, 9), and Christ abstained from nourishment, in a measure if not altogether, at the time of his great moral and spiritual battle. At the same time Jesus condemns the mechanical, superstitious practice of the fast as a form.

God is not pleased with form as form. His religion is not mechanical and external but of the heart. This is the underlying spirit of this sixth chapter up to the eighteenth verse. Your righteousness is not to be in the sight of men, not formal, but real. How inconsistent, says he, it would be for his disciples to fast, while they still have the bridegroom with them. The Gospel of Jesus was the Gospel of gladness, while the re-

ligion of John was the gospel of gloom. John was the prophet of the night; the night, if you will, which sloped toward the morning, but none the less of the night. Christ was the prophet of the light. The day had come with him.

We see further how the teaching and prophecy of Jesus were later fulfilled on that night when they scattered, as sheep without a shepherd — during those three days when they felt that their leader and head had been removed, we may rest assured that they fasted and that their fast was genuine. But after this the shepherd came back to his sheep; the Master returned to his disciples — and the cause for fasting as a religious practice was forever removed.

Then Jesus proceeds to give his questioners a reason why formal fasting may be abated. The cloth of gladness will not fit into the garment of gloom, the spirit of rejoicing would burst the old wine skins of sadness. The teaching that Jesus here gives finds its echo in the words of Paul in his letters to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say rejoice."³ In other words, Christ in these passages acknowledges the principle of fasting, which principle we shall consider later, but condemns its present practice.

Jesus condemns this practice because of the

³ Philip. iv, 4.

false idea of God that it contained: the idea that affliction and disfiguring of the body, in itself, was pleasing to the Almighty. The idea that mechanical methods could purchase favor with God. Such an idea rests on a false premise — to wit, that God is our enemy, our ill-wisher, that He finds pleasure in our affliction and discomfort, that He is jealous of human pleasure and human happiness. This is a heathen idea, and finds illustration among the heathen nations, even the most enlightened of them. How prominent among the Greeks, with their knowledge and culture, how evident in their dramas and mythologies, is the idea that the gods are jealous, envious, bitter toward men. The gods of those times could not bear to see their subjects too prosperous, successful or happy. What scheming in the circles of Olympus to defeat the plans and darken the life of some poor human, who was a favorite of one of the gods and hence an enemy of all the others! Nor did this idea which seems to grow native among the heathen nations, find abatement in later times among those peoples who had been taught in the religion of Christ.

The history of the church is filled with illustration of belief in this fact — that God grudges happiness to man and is placated and pleased with the life of misery. This section of the moral

and religious history of mankind affords most fascinating, while most depressing, reading. At all events, read W. H. Lecky's "History of European Morals" and we find ample evidence of the prevalence of this unchristian belief. I quote at length from Mr. Lecky's second volume. "There is, perhaps, no phase in the moral history of mankind of deeper or more painful interest than this ascetic epidemic. A hideous, sordid and emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghastly phantoms of his delirious brain, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero and the lives of Socrates and Cato."⁴ "For about two centuries the hideous maceration of the body was regarded as the highest proof of excellence." Men went without food, without sleep, without washing, without comfort — enduring sufferings, privations, flagellations, macerations, not because they were necessary or required by the circumstances of a life of service, but for mere form's sake — and to win favor with a God who delighted in the misery of his creatures.

⁴ *Vid.* here *et seq.*, W. H. Lecky's "History of European Morals," Vol. II, pp. 100-140, edition 1879.

There is the record of one monk, "who for thirty years had lived exclusively on a small portion of barley bread and of muddy water, and of another, who lived in a hole and never ate more than five figs for his daily repast."

There was a famous saint, named John, of whom it is asserted "that for three whole years he stood in prayer, leaning upon a rock; that during all that time he never sat down, and that his only nourishment was the sacrament which was brought him on Sundays." While there were literally multitudes who practiced these hideous rites, the palm of excellence must, without doubt, be yielded to St. Simeon Stylites, who exceeded all his brethren in the severity of his life. Of him Mr. Lecky writes: "It would be difficult to conceive of a more horrible or disgusting picture than is given of the penances by which that saint commenced his ascetic career. He had bound a rope around him so that it became imbedded in his flesh, which putrified around it. A horrible stench, intolerable to the bystanders, exhaled from his body, and worms dropped from him whenever he moved, and they filled his bed! He built successively three pillars, the last being sixty feet high and scarcely two cubits in circumference, and on this pillar, during thirty years, he remained exposed to every change of climate,

ceaselessly and rapidly bending his body in prayer almost to the level of his feet." "For a whole year we are told St. Simeon stood upon one leg, the other being covered with hideous ulcers, while his biographer was commissioned to stand by his side, to pick up the worms that fell from his body, and to replace them in the sores, the saint saying to the worm, 'Eat what God has given you.' " He it was whom "the general voice of mankind pronounced to be the highest model of a Christian saint; and several other anchorites imitated or emulated his penances."

Another strange manifestation of this principle of formal fasting is evidenced in the insane desire to destroy that which is naturally attractive or beautiful. "The cleanliness of the body was regarded as a pollution of the soul, and the saints who were most admired had become one mass of clotted filth." "St. Abraham the hermit, who lived for fifty years after his conversion, rigidly refused from that date to wash either his face or his feet." "He was, it is said, a person of singular beauty, and his biographer somewhat strangely remarks that 'his face reflected the purity of his soul.' " "A famous virgin named Silvia, though she was sixty years old and though bodily sickness was a consequence of her habits, resolutely refused on religious principles to wash

any part of her body except her fingers."

The hideous and grotesque painting of the face and body, by the African and Indian savage in his religious ceremony is a further illustration of this disfigurement and destruction of the naturally beautiful. Nor have there been wanting, in any age of the history of the church, among circles most highly educated and cultured, individuals and groups who have shown this same desire to abhor and condemn that which is beautiful. Ever have there been those who have protested that all adornment of the person, all grace of dress and outward appearance was a sin against God, and to be utterly condemned. We can only stand and marvel at the darkness of superstition and the deceivableness of sin in the hearts of those people who while living in a world, which God has clothed with beauty and adorned in every part with a glory which is but a faint reflection of His own nature, yet thought that hideousness and ugliness, must be acceptable unto Him.

Still one other fruit, the product of this baneful principle, that God loves to see His children miserable and takes delight in human unhappiness, is found in another form of fasting—the annihilation of all that gives pleasure and all that delights the senses or comforts the life of man. "The hermit's cell was the scene of perpetual

mourning." "The duty," said St. Jerome, "of a monk is not to teach but to weep." If the natural rigors and privations of the hermit's life were not enough to distress and harrow his flesh, he must needs resort to flagellations and penances, until his ideal bodily misery was accomplished. To be comfortable was to be irreligious, to be miserable was to please God.

One particular form of robbing the life of its gladness and joy was the severing of those natural ties and the destruction of those natural affections implanted by God. "A man named Mutius, accompanied by his only child, a little boy eight years old, abandoned his possessions and demanded admission into a monastery. The monks received him but they proceeded to discipline his heart." "He had already forgotten that he was rich, he must next be taught to forget that he was a father." "His little child was separated from him, clothed in dirty rags, subject to every form of gross and wanton hardship, beaten, spurned, and ill treated." All this the father had to behold and at last, as the crucial test, "the abbot told him to take his child and to throw it into the river. He proceeded without a murmur or apparent pang, to obey, and it was only at the last moment that the monks interposed, and on the very brink of the river saved

the child.”⁵ Instances of a similar sort might be multiplied, but enough to say that fathers left their children and families, children left their aged and dependent parents. And in this gruesome category we have ample illustration of what Paul said of those last days, when men should be lovers of their own selves, for this entire practice was but sublimated selfishness, and a man’s whole aim to save his own soul, “boasters, proud, disobedient to parents, unholy, and without natural affection.”⁶ How strange it is that men did and men do attribute to the good God, “a character that would disgrace a Hottentot.”

How this inhuman, unnatural practice of men contrasts with the Master’s teaching concerning our heavenly Father. God is our well-wisher, our friend, our Father, and not our enemy. This is the teaching of reason, of Scripture, and of Christ. The suffering of our body, the distresses of our lives, are a matter of His deep concern. Lovingly did Jesus say, “I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly”—more abundantly in body, mind and estate. And the following of his simple, beautiful teachings

⁵ For a study of asceticism, in more modern instances—and from the standpoint of a psychologist, *vid.* “Varieties of Religious Experiences,” by Wm. James, pp. 296–325, Longmans, Green & Co., 1906.

⁶ II Tim. iii, 2.

will produce these desired results. Clearly is it written, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit — therefore glorify God in your body." ⁷ Again, "If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy." ⁸ How could men ever have dreamed that the abuse of the body, which He gave them, could be pleasing or acceptable to Him? Or that the Giver of every good gift and of every perfect giving could be envious of men's enjoyment and use of life's goods?

How clearly did Jesus perceive and condemn the evil of this formal fasting — when men should become hypocrites, mummers, play-actors, for this is the meaning of the Greek word, proud and boastful of their formal righteousness. "Be not as these," said the Master; "hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast." "They have their reward." They are seen, recorded and pitied for their ignorance, or condemned for their superstition.

Yet while Jesus condemned the present practice of fasting, we believe it is likewise true that he commended the underlying principle of fasting. "When ye fast," implies that men are to-

⁷ I Cor. vi, 19-20.

⁸ I Cor. iii, 17.

day to have that principle in their service and worship which underlies the fast, and which constitutes its true worth, the principle of self-denial. This principle of unselfishness, and self-denial underlies the observance of all true religion. It is a principle that has been recognized by the spiritual-minded in every age of the world's history. Nowhere does it find stronger endorsement nor clearer exposition than in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. In that passage,⁹ as in these words of Jesus, the affliction of the soul, the disfigurement of the body, the external observances of contrition and humiliation, however studied or artistic, are condemned as not acceptable unto the Lord. In short, these are not to be called a fast at all. But if the servant of God would have a fast that is pleasing and acceptable to God, let him loose the bands of wickedness, remove the burden from the over-loaded, feed the hungry, house the poor, cover the naked, be a brother to those who are related to you by the ties of blood and to those who are related to you by the bonds of a common humanity. This will call for all the self-denial and all the self-sacrifice of which you are capable, and this will meet with the approval and blessing of God, for then "shall thy righteousness go before thee and

⁹ Isa. lviii, 5-8.

the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." Such a principle of fasting has been needed and of service in every age of the race's history, and is needed to-day as much as ever it was.

The principle of fasting, then, stated in its largest form, which Christ here inculcates, is this, that wherever the lower in life is made subservient to the higher, there is the true idea of fasting. This was the principle that actuated Daniel and the three Israelitish children in their living in Babylon; this was the principle that actuated Abraham to give up the pasture plains and the wells of water to the more selfish Lot; this was the ideal which strengthened the Apostle Paul to fight and keep his body under and made him the great apostle of sacrificing service, that he might be of use to his brethren.

Says Jesus, "Let a man deny himself" that self which is so obtrusive, which so tends to assert its claims, which is so willing to eat all the fat and drink all the sweet, while the brother is in want.

This is the principle which applies to a man's time — that gift of God, which while given in abundance is yet given in limitation. This is the principle which says to the naturally selfish man, and yet to the right-minded man: Some of your time belongs to God, and must be dedicated to

Him in the service of the church, the prayer-meeting, and the culture of the soul, that the rest of your time may be rightly used. This is the principle which teaches the man that of life's "goods"—some are to be given to the service of his fellows and to the advancement of the kingdom. This is the principle which lays its just tax on a man's powers and talents, place and possession, that the brother may be helped, his own life enriched and his God glorified.

And further, says Jesus, "Let the one who lives according to this divine principle of self-denial, see that he exercises it in the right spirit." Not unwillingly nor grudgingly, not with a sad countenance and a disfigured face, as though he were doing an unwelcome thing, but with an anointed head and a face that is washed and beautified with a smile. Let him not exercise this service in a fearful and superstitious manner, because of the wrath of God, but in an intelligent, appreciative, happy, spiritual, "in secret" way, because of the love of God. Then comes that promise, containing the incentive and the reward of practicing such a righteousness, that promise sealed by the very character of God and set, I am sure, in a smile on the Savior's face as he spake it, "Thy Father shall see, and thy Father shall reward thee." "Then shall thy light break

forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily." "And the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." ¹⁰

¹⁰ Isa. lviii, 8 and 11.

CHAPTER XII

LIVE FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF GOLD

Matt. vi, 19-21

THE Divine Physician has thus far been considering the heavenly hygiene: he has been speaking of the soul in health, and laying down those rules of life which make for well-being — that state of life termed blessedness, to which he calls our attention in his opening words. Now he turns from this theme, with logical sequence, to an exhibition of those things which threaten the spiritual well being, and imperil the health of the “man within”; and first he calls attention to that disease of mankind, that destruction of blessedness, which arises from an inordinate love of gold, the source of so many of life’s ills, from the earliest days. The whole business of life could not be better described than in the figure of the text which our Instructor here uses — treasure hunting. Hunting and laying up treasure is what men do, what they want to do, and what they ought to do. This is one great business of life.

It is instinctive in mankind to lay up treasure.

To-day psychology is turning its observant eye to the more careful study of the mind in its early stages; it is making a profitable study of child life. If in this instance we turn our thought to the child life, what do we find? Sometime, when the opportunity is favorable, ask your young son of eight to twelve years of age, to show you the treasures of his pocket, and what are you sure to find? Tops and strings and screws and things — and every conceivable article. I know on one such occasion, among other valuable treasures, the body of a dead mouse was produced as worth preserving (I use the term advisedly). Go into a young lad's room and what do you find? — a veritable storehouse of treasures — here a collection of birds' eggs, there a gathering of stones — yonder the stamp album, etc., etc. Professor James tells us in his *Psychology* that out of a hundred students whom he had questioned only four or five had never collected anything, and Professor G. S. Hall says that in a similar investigation "only nineteen out of two hundred and twenty-nine had made no collections." If we are to trust to the testimony of impartial witnesses — treasure hunting and treasure storing is natural to the human species. This quality in man is instinctive and is also found among the animals of a lower order — as witness the propensities

of the raven, the jack-daw, the wood-rat, which lay up treasures, not for food or use, but simply because of natural instinct.

Moreover, this is an occupation that is most congenial to men; listen to the conversation of the average man with his fellows on street car or train and is not the burden of it, "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain"? Yes, these are the things which interest, occupy, absorb and satisfy the lives of most of mankind.

Moreover, to hunt treasure is what men ought to do; this is a natural, sensible, wise and highly moral obligation. We are in this world for a purpose — for this purpose; inactivity is not right, idleness is immoral. The underlying teaching of "take the talent from him and give it to him that hath ten" is that only he who uses and increases what he has, really possesses anything or is truly fulfilling his work in life. We ought to grow richer as we live, if life has any meaning at all.

"Oh!" says the listener, "we are so glad to hear it; then humanity is all right, for as I go about the earth and observe men, I find that this is just what they are doing."

"Hold! not so fast. Suppose you should see

grown men making the business of life the gathering up of birds' eggs, of piles of stones, of old rubbish, that surely would not be the purpose of life?" And this is just what men have done and are doing, literally; for this instinct of acquisitiveness has strange illustration. Again, reverting for illustration to Professor James, he writes, "Lately in a Massachusetts town there died a miser who principally hoarded newspapers. These had ended by so filling the rooms of his good-sized house from floor to ceiling that his living-space was restricted to a few narrow channels between them." And of another instance he records, "He gathered old newspapers, wrapping-paper, incapacitated umbrellas, canes, pieces of common wire, cast-off clothing, empty barrels, pieces of iron, battered tinware, fractured pots and bushels of such miscellany as is to be found only at the city dump." There was the instinct, the activity, the work, but behold the treasure! The trouble is not with the instinct, nor the ambition, nor the desire — but with the treasure. The instinct was right, the desire was right — the activity was right — but its direction and expression that were wrong.

Now Jesus classes the collecting of gold — the treasure-hunting and treasure-storing of goods and wealth, among the rubbish heap of life's good

things, and therefore he here warns men to live free from the bondage of this habit. And is it not true to-day, that most men's lives are in slavery to the getting of gold? Is not this the spirit of our age? Professor James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience," in recognizing the worth of certain ascetic practices, among others praises the practice of poverty. Says he, "Among us English-speaking peoples especially do the praises of poverty need once more to be boldly sung. We have grown literally afraid to be poor. . . . The desire to gain wealth and the fear to lose it are our chief breeders of cowardice and propagators of corruption. . . . There are thousands of conjunctures in which a wealthbound man must be a slave, whilst a man for whom poverty has no terrors becomes a freeman. . . . When we of the so-called better classes are scared as men were never scared in history at material ugliness and hardship; when we put off marriage until our house can be artistic, and quake at the thought of having a child without a bank account and doomed to manual labor, it is time for thinking men to protest against so unmanly and irreligious a state of opinion. . . . I recommend this matter to your serious pondering, for it is certain that the prevalent fear of poverty among the educated classes is the worst moral disease from

which our civilization suffers.”

To what extremes of moral iniquity and moral indifference will not men go in the fulfillment of this inordinate desire for wealth; food which is meant for the nourishment of the body will be adulterated with substances which starve and poison — drugs intended for the healing of the sick are adulterated with chemicals which hinder if they do not help such an end.

“I must be rich,” expresses the purpose of too many men. “Thou must be rich,” is the burden of too much of our teaching to our children.

What have not men done, what have they not endured, through the love of gold? It was the search for the treasure of the Indies that sent Columbus sailing westward, over the perilous Atlantic Ocean. It was the love of gold that inspired Pizzaro to invade Peru; it was this same object that led Cortez to conquer Mexico, to the curse of its inhabitants, himself and his followers. The bones of the Forty-niners dotted the plains of the West they must cross in seeking the gold-fields of California in quest of gold. And the sacrifices, the sufferings and the perils which the Klondikers endured in their hunt for the yellow treasure are still fresh in our minds. There is no peril too great, no command too severe, no undertaking too hazardous, for that

man who has been really seized by the lust of gold. The desire for riches is inordinate, the demand for wealth is insatiable, the means by which it is gotten is immaterial in far too many instances. What will not a man give up? what will he not cheerfully sacrifice, in obedience to this inordinate desire?

It is not in this passage alone, but in other places also in the Gospel record that Jesus refers to this madness of mankind, to those who sacrifice the better, the higher, the truer treasures of life — for the sake of their gold. How he characterizes and classifies the unwisdom of such in the parable of "the Rich Fool"! Him whom men call only "a certain rich man," God calls, "Thou fool."

I must tell you the story of a poor fool I once saw, perhaps you have seen him too. I recollect the first time I saw him he was sitting on the floor in the corner of a great room playing as would a child. I remember as I approached the pitiable creature I was struck by his appearance; his face had a vacant, animal look, his eyes were jaundiced and yellow, and his coarse lips slobbered and slavered as he played. Then my eye lighted on the playthings that were engaging his attention; these were bright pieces of metal, yellow disks that had a clink and glint to them, and

looked to me like coins. These he allowed to run through his fingers in a golden stream; he put them into his eyes and ears and stuffed them into his mouth; and then he would roll in the shining heap, seemingly desirous of enveloping himself in them, as you have seen a cat behave with its loved catnip. The case seemed all the sadder to me by contrast; because in another corner of this great room near a window sat an artist. I looked over his shoulder and saw that he was painting a scene from nature, a view of sky and shore, and the great ocean as it lay upon the bosom of the beach. And as this artist looked out upon the countenance of nature and sought to reproduce the beauty that rested there, his face was lightened, and I thought for the moment that he must have seen the soul of things. But the fool did not see because of the metal pieces he had put over his eyes. And there he sat, and played, seemingly content, not knowing that he had lost this field of pleasure, this "world of profit and delight." In still another corner sat a musician playing on an organ. Under his magic touch, forth from this instrument came the sweetest harmonies. His face and bearing were such a contrast to that of the fool's; his whole soul seemed to be suffused and thrilled with the flood of music that flowed through him; it was as though he

heard the heavenly music and the singing of the choir invisible; his face was lifted up and his look was away from earth. But the fool did not hear, for at this moment his ears were filled with his golden playthings. In the fourth corner of that great room sat one who was reading in a book. I glanced at the back of the book and saw its title was "the Word of God," and as he read, he mused, and as he mused his heart burned, and you could see the glow of his thoughts in his face, for his face shone as it had been the face of an angel; he had an attent look as though he heard voices, a rapt expression as though he saw visions, and, as I saw, I thought, "How like a god is man." But the fool did not heed for he was employed and absorbed in running the metal bits through his fingers, and counting them over as they fell.

Yet sad as was this case — no one held him guilty, for he was born a fool. He himself was not to blame — just an ordinary fool — but I could not help thinking what if one should intentionally get himself into this condition, into the state of this driveling idiot — how could such a fool escape just blame.

O, what heart aches, heart breaks, divisions in families, destruction of affection, sacrifices of the best in men, have been caused by those who sought to lay up for themselves treasures upon the

earth. What a hard master is the lust of gold! And then I heard the ringing of "The Bells," the bells of conscience, the bells of accusation — and before me passed Mathias, his face in terror, as he beheld the Polish Jew he had murdered — murdered that he might have his gold.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth," says the Master — for it not only makes a man a slave in the getting but it is the bondage of life to that man who has gotten. Behold the money lover's utter dependence on his wealth; he will give up everything really worth having to keep that gold which is not worth having. Was not this the teaching of Christ's experience with the rich young ruler. An earnest, honest, sincere, amiable, worthy young man, yet so bound by his golden chains that in sadness he turns away from the Lord of Life.

They that trust in their riches will sacrifice friends, family affection, honor, fame, religion, soul and God, before they will lose their hold of that fatal treasure.

And mark you here, the peril of this disease depends not on the matter of degree but on the kind. The man who loves and trusts in his hundred dollars is of like kind with the man who loves and trusts his millions. Each is bitten with the cancer. Each is doomed to death — unless the

malefic growth be cut out.

Is it not a striking and significant fact that that great image which Nebuchadnezzar made and set up in the plain of Dura and commanded men to worship was an image of Gold? Men were worshipping gold over two millenniums and a half ago, as men are worshipping the golden image to-day. Christ is here dealing with an inveterate menace to the well-being of man.

I once knew a man, in our day, who had an idol carved of gold. He was accustomed to have it set in a temple called a "sky-scraper," in a great city, and in an holy-place called an office. There he would go every day to worship it with the strangest ceremonies and rites. He would bow down before this image sometimes forty times a day. He would make offerings to it of honor, honesty, manhood and truth. But, even stranger than this, once in a while he would go out into the streets of this great city and catching one of his friends by guile, he would bind him hand and foot with fair promises, and bring him into this holy place before the golden idol. Then he would bring out a sharp knife and slitting the throat of his best friend he would spill his blood on the floor, leaving the friend's children fatherless and the friend's widow to mourn in a desolate household.

But even stranger than this — I have known him to take his own children and give them the slow poison of false ideals and teachings concerning gold, until on the last day, when the powerful drug had worked to the killing point, he would put the innocent little one into a carriage, weak and dying, and would bring the child into this holy place to die, at the foot of the golden image; himself dancing about and rubbing his hands with glee. Then still more strange, the son or daughter being dead, he would clothe himself in deep mourning, buy a dozen pocket handkerchiefs and go about the streets, alternately weeping and drying his eyes with one of the dozen handkerchiefs, that people might think him sane and sound of mind, overcome with natural grief and filled with real affection. These and a hundred more such foolish things he would do. The attention of the authorities was again and again called to his irrational acts; the blood stains on the floor of the sacrificial altar were shown; the dead bodies of his children were exhibited, and some sensible men said that he should really be put into an asylum. But the authorities only shook their heads and said, "No; his children are his own and he has a right to do with them as he pleases."

"We are sorry about the friends, but business is business" (a phrase by which the authorities

were wont to excuse themselves). "As for his worship of that golden idol — surely a man may worship what he chooses."

So the man was not adjudged of unsound, unbalanced or even abnormal mind, but was applauded and accounted a shrewd and successful business man by the majority of his fellows. But the really wise judged him to be a fool, and their judgment was true, for on a certain day it was found that his madness had run to such a degree that he took his own life at the foot of the golden image which he had worshiped so long — and then all men knew why the wise had long since declared that he was only a rich fool.

Is it not true to the facts, as Christ here intimates, that those who fix their hearts on gold are all their lives under the bondage of the fear of losing it? You have seen that worldly wealthy man sitting up o' nights, figuring, planning, suffering through the dread of coming to "the poor house." I believe it to be true, that that fabled "Wolf" of want, of which so many unpleasant things are said, more often thrusts his gaunt, wizened, hungry visage into the mansion of the rich than into the door of the poor man's house.

Now Jesus tells us here, in strongest terms, that that thing which those who trust in riches most dread, the loss of gold and goods, is that thing

which is most certain to happen. Therefore, concludes he, do not put your trust in that which you must lose. His general teaching is that these riches contain within them the very elements of their own destruction — “moth and rust” wear and tear — depreciation and change — earthiness — evanescence, characterize them all. And when this disintegration has taken place your riches are gone.

But besides the corruption which is of the very essence of these things — there are abstracting influences from without — “thieves break through and steal.” Is this not true to every age of the world’s history? We are mindful of that man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and experienced such hard usage at the hands of thieves.

Macaulay in his History of England, in that gem of all the chapters, “The State of England in 1685,” has a section devoted to highwaymen. Says he, “Whatever might be the way in which a journey was performed, the travelers, unless they were numerous and well armed, ran considerable risk of being stopped and plundered. The mounted highwayman, a marauder known to our generation only from books, was to be found on every main road.”

Even those picturesque castles on the Rhine are

some of them only the stately abodes of the highwaymen of the river, who, to quote from one of John L. Stoddard's lectures, "Like vultures, from their eyries, watched the boats descend the stream, and if the tribute they demanded was refused them, they promptly attacked the crew and secured the cargo for themselves."

And even to-day, while we can boast of but few of the bold, dramatic highwaymen of the earlier times, we have our artistic and thorough-going bands of thieves, who rob legally, quietly and by wholesale. Let no one say that we have no Robber Barons, and that thieves do not break through and steal, while the trusts are among us to throttle the life out smaller industries, and bear away our savings in a gentleman-like way, and according to law. The motto of the wise and witty wag, "Blessed are they who have nothing, for they cannot lose it," testifies that even to-day "thieves break through and steal."

Though a man might be so shrewd, so strong or so fortunate as to escape all of these marauders, does the Christ teach us, in that parable of the Rich Fool, illustrative of the very text on which he is here speaking, that this does not mean that he has escaped the inevitable penalty of those who trust in riches. For, though one might have traversed all life's roads, sailed down all its

rivers, braved its perils of robbers, yet, when it comes to the crossing of that last, narrow, dark, swift-flowing stream — there meets us on its brink the robber “Death” — who quietly commands, “Leave all your goods on the hither side,” and him all men obey. “Then whose shall those things be?” How poor indeed is that man who enters eternity, the necessities of heaven bartered for gold, and the gold taken from him at its gates? What provision has he left for the long journey of eternity?

But our Life’s Teacher is not so poor a psychologist, so impractical an instructor, as to merely arrest and stun us with a negative command. He knows that the true law of a wise inhibition is to give a new, a right direction, to man’s instinctive impulses. Therefore follows the command, the complement of the other, “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” Seek as your golden store, the heavenlies — those things which lie in the spiritual, the unseen and therefore in the sphere of the eternal. Make your “goods” to be those of the heart, the mind, the soul; patience, lowliness, kindness, is such a casket of jewels; purity, peaceableness, service, is such a mine of treasure. What a blessed thought, what a satisfying sight, what a worthy occupation, to behold one day by day adding to the

richer self. What a noble work for the man! A new country conquered, a new waste tract or savage tribe in self subjugated and brought under right and reasonable action. Period after period of life, to find a new gem, a new treasure, a bright nugget of real gold, added to the riches of the heart life. Then to realize that these are treasures that can never perish, can never depreciate in value! We can readily conceive of a time when clothes and fashion no longer interest; we can picture a moment when food and well stored barns cease to be of worth or service; we can imagine conditions when gold is no longer valuable; but we cannot conceive of the moment, nor dream of the time, when the kingdom of heaven, when God and His truth, His promises, His love, His fatherly relation to men, would not make lighter sorrow, brighter joy, and richer the soul who has them. These are the "goods" of life, which have no corrupting quality within, which are not in peril of being stolen from without; these are the spiritual riches which the more they are spent the more they increase.

Then the Master concludes, with that pregnant sentence which gives the reason of it all: "For where thy treasure is there will thy heart be also." The heart is the man — and the man is the concern of all of our Master's teaching.

CHAPTER XIII

LIVE FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS

Matt. vi, 22-24

THERE are some who have thought that this passage is interpolated, out of order, unrelated and meaningless. But I think that a degree of study will reveal to us the fact that it is necessary, in place, related to the context and very significant in its meaning.

It is true that the passage faces two ways, and may be connected logically with either the preceding or the following passages; it certainly looks backward and is an illustration of what has just been said, and it looks forward by way of introduction to what is about to be said. It is, in short, the connecting link between the thought, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also," and the approaching thought, "Be not anxious for your life," etc.

It is the New Testament echo of that appeal made on Carmel's height, that afternoon so many centuries before, when the prophet Elijah called his trembling auditors to a decision with the

words, "How long will ye go limping between two opinions — if the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal be god then follow him." ¹ It is the Master's reiteration of those principles insisted on by the prophets in every stage of Israel's history — singleness of purpose, fixity of choice — oneness of service.

Israel's great sin, the sin which weakened her national life, the sin which carried her away into the Babylonian captivity, was vacillation, double-mindedness, half-heartedness, the fruitless and fatal attempt to serve two masters.

This same lesson Jesus seeks to impress, in this instance, by proving the impossibility of any other course. This he does by means of the connected syllogism known in logic as the enthymeme. "This is peculiarly the argument of the orator. Jesus Christ, who spoke as never man spake, frequently employed this contracted syllogistic form. The Beatitudes, recorded in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew are beautiful examples." ² He resorts to the *reductio ad absurdum* — he who serves more than one master really serves no master, and reaches the conclusion, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" — therefore serve God.

¹ I Kings xviii, 21.

² "How to Attract and Hold an Audience," by J. Benjamin Esenwein, 1902.

The proposition he seeks to establish is this — the folly and futility of double-mindedness — the fatality of having two supreme purposes. The passage throughout is a keen piece of reasoning and requires close attention and sharp thinking to follow it.

The argument is introduced and illustrated and the points to be established are stated, by means of the figure of the eye, which teaches that the supreme purpose of the life is the master of the life. "The lamp or light of the body is the eye," etc.

Whatever be the origin of the eye, it is a wonderful organ and wonderfully placed. Whether the eye were created forthwith at the creation of man, or whether the eye has been developed and called out by the influence of the light rays on some more sensitive part of man's body, makes little difference. We are glad that the eye has appeared and glad that it has appeared just where it is, for to the function and to the position of the eye man is greatly indebted every day of his life. The eye from its power of vision contributes to life, profit, pleasure and power — and from its position it reveals peril, discloses advantages, guides the way and is the lamp of the entire man. It is an absolute deprivation to be blind; it is a relative deprivation to have a defective and im-

perfect sight. A man could not wish such an infirmity for himself, and a man would be rid of such an infirmity if he could.

Now the eye is, to one who sees thoughts in things, an apt physical illustration of a moral and spiritual truth; it is the symbol of foresight and purpose. The man whose eye is single and sound knows where he is going and walks a direct, sure course. The man whose eye is double, imperfect, walks in ignorance, and goes an uncertain, tortuous and dangerous way. Says the apostle James, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."³ And Peter writes concerning those who lack the vision of spiritual things, "But he that lacketh these things is blind and short-sighted" (myopic is the exact word).⁴ As we catch these thoughts, spontaneously before our minds passes the figure of a drunken man, who sees double, uncertainly, and goes reeling and staggering along his crooked and perilous road.

Now apply this figure taken from the physical to the mental and moral way of life, and we immediately apprehend the teaching of the passage: that man who has a clear, single, supreme purpose in life is the man who goes directly and surely to the goal, but the man who has a double

³ James i, 8.

⁴ II Peter i, 9.

purpose is the man who walks uncertainly and reaches — nowhere. In other words, life's purpose is life's lamp. With this striking introduction, the question is fairly before us. Turn now to the line of reasoning, and it is as follows: No man can serve two masters — no man can have two supreme purposes in life.

There is good reason and need for the Master to bring this truth before the minds of his hearers because there seems to be an inclination and a belief, evidenced by men's actions, that more than one supreme purpose in life is possible and that a man can serve two Masters. This attempt to serve more than one Master was true to the times long before Christ. The heathen prophet Balaam is an instance of such a man. Balaam is spoken of in the Scripture record as "the man whose eyes are open," the man "which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open."⁵ Of him writes Dean Stanley, "In his career is seen that recognition of divine inspiration outside the chosen people, which the narrowness of modern times has been so eager to deny, but which the Scriptures are always ready to acknowledge, and, by acknowledging, admit within the pale of the teachers of the universal church, the higher spirits

⁵ Numbers xxiv, 3-4.

of every age and of every nation.”⁶ In Balaam we have the case of a man who had a vision of God, a man who knew the right, a man who desired to speak the truth for God, until that day when Balak the son of Zippor came with his princes and with his presents and set before Balaam a new purpose — then his mind was divided, his vision was clouded, his way was uncertain and his end was pitiable. He attempted the impossible task of reconciling the service of God with the service of Mammon — and he failed.

Come down in the history of the Jews until the times of the kings and the divided empire, and in King Ahaz we have another instance of a like attempt. King Ahaz worshiped God, but he made his sons pass through the fire to Molech; he trusted in Jehovah but put himself under the base protection of Tiglath-Pilezer, king of Assyria; he sacrificed on the altar of the temple of Jehovah, but “he saw an altar that was at Damascus” and he sent home a copy of it for his workmen to build him one like it, and said, “The brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by.” His life was guided by a divided purpose, and so was a failure. As an evidence of this writes Dean Milman: “In short, had not his death relieved

⁶ “History of the Jewish Church,” A. P. Stanley.

his people, Jerusalem seemed rapidly following the example, and hastening towards the fate of Samaria." It was just such impossible and fatal principles that Hosea reproved, against these that Isaiah preached, these that Micah condemned, and because of these Jeremiah lamented.

Come down to the years after Christ, and do we not still find men attempting this impossible way? We need not wait long for the entrance of witnesses to the truth of the statement — Cardinal Wolsey pushes his way through the crowd of those ready to testify and takes the stand. Here was a man great with his master, Henry the Eighth; high in favor; like Joseph, second ruler in the kingdom; really the pope of England. He was a man whose life was guided by a double purpose — he sought to serve God and his office, and he sought to serve the king and his interests. That he served the king, he who runs may read; that he purposed serving God, the historian Green shows us in this sentence, "Were the marriage once made, he told the French ambassador, and a male heir born to the realm, he would withdraw from state affairs and serve God for the rest of his life." Let Wolsey's death-bed testimony witness to the worth of a double service. Says he, at that moment when we may count men ready to speak the truth, "Had I but

served God as diligently as I have served the king, He would not have given me over in my gray hairs. But this is my due reward for my pains and study, not regarding my service to God, but only my duty to my prince." Even as astute and strong a man as Wolsey could not serve two masters.

Come down to this present moment, and after so many years of trial and so many instances of failure do we not find men attempting the same thing? Men who divide things into secular and sacred, time into secular and sacred, service into secular and sacred, are seeking to serve two masters — the man who says to himself, as a lawyer once said to me, "I propose to make my pile, according to the way of the world, and then I propose to serve God according to the way of the Word." Most men are not as honest in their admission of the fact — but far too many are as diligent in their twofold service.

The man who is a believer in Jesus and yet not a confessor and follower of him, is making the futile attempt to serve two masters, is seeking to hold God in one hand and Mammon in the other, with the chances largely in favor of Mammon gaining occupancy of the other hand. He who lives after this plan walks in the night. "If thine eye be double, thy whole body shall be full

of darkness.”

From this point Jesus proceeds with the reasoning and exhibits the unwisdom of such a course. It is unwise because it is impossible. “Ye cannot,” is the categorical way in which he puts the matter.

We have heard of a Frenchman who, replying to his valet who had used the word “can’t” in his hearing, said, “Never use that odious and discouraging word in my presence again.”

Now while one must be cautious in declaring what is impossible, yet one can certainly affirm that the contradictory is impossible; and to have two supreme purposes in life is contradictory. It is a contradiction in terms. Moreover, it is a contradiction in fact; man’s mind and man’s soul can no more go in two opposite directions at the same time than can his body. His soul is so constituted that it is a unit and cannot be divided against itself. He thinks, wills and feels as one, and the activity of one faculty involves the activity of the whole man. The very limitations of choice make such a course impossible. The choice of one object is the rejection of others, the choice of one purpose is the rejection of others, the choice of one master is the rejection of all others.

Not only is this course morally impossible,

but it is actually impracticable, says our Teacher, because, if a man could have two masters, "He will either love the one and hate the other," which means that a man's love is divided — a divided love is an imperfect love — and an imperfect love, half-hearted love, is no love at all.

It is this divided love which has blighted, blackened and destroyed so many families and homes of earth. And with respect to a man's relation to his God, a divided love is against the very spirit of all law and command, for it is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." To have two masters is to divide life's service; "He will hold to the one, and despise (disregard) the other," and a divided service is an imperfect service.

The man who makes his supreme purpose in life riches, cannot make it God and his kingdom at the same time.

The service of pleasure and knowledge are not infrequently incompatible. Popularity and character are often inconsistent. On the counters of this world a man is offered a great variety of "goods," and the business of this life is to learn to choose the best among them. What God demands of his subjects is a perfect, whole-hearted service, and "Thou shalt have no other gods be-

fore me " is the *sine qua non* to real religion.

From these arguments, and from a glance at man and the world of men, is it not easy to infer that such a course is fatal to the man himself? It is destructive of his peace, his power and his efficiency. To have two masters is to be torn asunder, to be in a condition of mental unbalance, to be in continual debate with one's self; it results in instability, vacillation, mental distress and disquiet. Now these things are destructive of purpose, whose chief characteristic is fixity, certainty and unchangeableness. Therefore, the man who has more than one purpose is the man who has no purpose. His life is like a ship, whose compass is broken, sailing in the night over a troubled sea, under a sky wherein there is no fixed star, no point by which to direct the course.

Such a plan of life is fatal to a man with relation to his fellows. What do practical men think of the man who talks one way and works another — of the man who is double-faced, double-minded, double-purposed — of that person whose relation to truth depends not on principle but on convenience — of that person whose service depends not on character but on comfort? The qualities of manhood to-day demanded in every station and calling of life are dependableness, fidelity, fixity and oneness of purpose. This

is what the king demands in his subjects; this is what the commander asks in the soldier; this is what the pupil needs in a teacher; this is what the employer requires in the employee; it is what the mistress seeks in her housemaid; this is what the Church wants in its members. This is what God asks in his servants. God will not ask of a man in service less than a man asks of his fellows. Therefore, the conclusion is reached, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," for this is to serve two masters, which we have shown to be impossible; hence, have one Master and that one God.

To have one Master is light and life. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light." A single, clear purpose gives the entire man freedom from uncertainty and doubt. The goal fixed, the mind is left free as to the best course of attaining it. Whatever we may think of the worth or worthlessness of the goal, the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III of England, set for his ambition, one thing we must admit, he had unparalleled fixity of purpose and singleness of aim. This dwarfed and mighty will said, "My purpose is to sit on the throne of England," and from that purpose nothing could swerve him. If Lords Grey, Rivers, Hastings, nephews, brother, friends, any one or anything stood in the way, they must be swept aside.

There was no vacillation, no doubt; he hewed a straight course to a known end. Singleness of purpose settles a man's mind and lends direction and color to all his life. In settling the great purpose, all lesser and conflicting ends are settled. That young man who has settled for himself his work and calling in life, in the greater choice has set the course of many of his lesser choices. Now light is shed upon the various ways of study, habits, training — his whole life is filled with light. He goes no longer gropingly but sees and knows the way he takes.

A singleness of purpose gives a man an ordered, effective, positive life. Paul's great strength sprang from that principle upon which he ever acted, "This one thing I do." He was whole hearted as a follower of Judaism, and when his life purpose changed, he was body, soul and spirit, a follower of Christ. It was singleness of purpose that made the life of Luther potent and effective. And John Brown of Ossawatimie was a great factor in our national history because he had determined by his life or by his death that the negro slaves must be freed. Have one master in your life is the teaching of life's greatest Master; have one master in your life is the teaching of the successes and failures of the lives of men. And by implication, Christ

teaches us, let that Master be God. To have God and His kingdom as the great purpose of life, is commensurate with life's highest capabilities, and is in harmony with the highest ends of the universe. To be in right relation to the center of the circle is to be in right relation to every point in that circle; to be in right relation with the Heart of the Universe is to be in right relation with every part of the universe.

This logical argument, this rational conclusion, is an introduction to that warning which the Savior is about to give, "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed." It is the foundation upon which the great life purpose shall be built, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

CHAPTER XIV

LIVE FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF WORLDLY CARE

Matt. vi, 25-34

IF Jesus had never spoken any other words than those contained in this passage, if he had never taught the world any other lesson that this contained in this passage, his life had not been lived in vain. If men would only receive and believe this truth as true, if they would only lay to their hearts and apply to their lives this needed, practical lesson, what a brighter, happier world we should live in. But in this very matter where men have the most need they have the least faith; where the Master can most help them, they are the least willing to follow his leading.

The civil and economic conditions of the people of Palestine were not as favorable as they are at the present day. The people were not as well fed, as well clothed, as well housed, nor as well paid as they are to-day. "The peasant population of the Oriental world were then, and indeed, are generally now, the tenants at will of a

despot.”¹ “The Jews were not a commercial people.” “Manufactures were of the simplest kind. There was little or no machinery.” “The chief vocation of the Jew was agriculture. But what modern farmer with his well-fenced farm, his bursting barns and granaries, his innumerable plows and drills and reapers and mowers and threshers, in the midst of which he stands bewildered by the very multiplicity of the conveniences that are offered to him, would recognize the Jewish agriculturist?” “Military despotism, that cared nothing for the people except to gather from their hard-earned pittance all that rapacity could extort, subjected them to a most corrupt, oppressive and nefarious taxation.”

“The houses, in the case of the peasants, were wretched, one-roomed huts of mud; in the case of the wealthiest, were barren of the simplest necessities of modern life, though ornate with luxury.”

If there be anything in external conditions to free a man's life from fret and anxiety, people of this country and this day have less cause for worry than those who lived in the midst of the Palestinian civilization. And yet it was to a people thus circumstanced that Jesus speaks these stirring words.

¹ This and the following quotations from “Jesus of Nazareth, His Life and Teachings,” by Lyman Abbott.

This is Christ's "Don't Worry" sermon; it has never been surpassed; it has never been equaled; it is a practical talk by a practical man upon a practical theme. As we have intimated before, the foundation upon which this practical advice is made to rest — is in that principle he has just established — ye cannot have two masters, have but one — that one God, and show your trust and complete service to Him by freeing yourselves from the burden and bondage of worldly care and worry.

The theme of the discourse, which runs like a golden thread from beginning to end, which is repeated formally three times, and which underlies and colors every thought and word of this passage, is, "Be not anxious." And please to observe that this freedom from anxiety is to be in the sphere of the physical, the material, the temporal necessities, in that very region where men fear most and worry most. He is not now speaking of things divine and the world to come — but of this present time, and this present world, with its necessities, its wants, its need of food and drink and clothes — this very world which is round about us and in which we all must live.

Jesus' order of statement of his teaching is logical, clear and forcible — in his opening words he declares that men are wont to worry about that

about which they ought not to worry. What is the great source of worry to the lives of most persons? Was it not the same in that age as it is in this age? Is it not ever the same, could our average source of worry be more aptly, compactly, completely summed up, than in the word anxiety for the life, what we shall eat, what we shall drink and what we shall wear? These were the things that people were worrying about in the day when Jesus was on earth. Human nature in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago was much the same as human nature in America at the present day. The underlying life has changed but little. People worried about their meat and raiment then; people worry about their meat and raiment now. Jesus had experience with worrying people of this kind — he came near to the hearts of the people and he knew what troubled their lives. One day while he was talking of the eternal riches and blessings, while he was making clear to his hearers God's care for them and His minute regard for the least things of their lives — one of the audience, whose thoughts had been far from the preacher, who had been dwelling on the injustice of a selfish brother, and who feared for his own material well-being, interrupted the sermon with the request, "Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance

with me." Yes, he knew what it was that troubled the hearts of men. He knew what it was to have an inattentive audience, a fearful follower, a faithless disciple, a doubting learner, all through the bondage of this world's care. And many a man of the present day is driven into the impossible task of striving to serve two masters through the fear and worry that his present temporal needs will not be cared for by the God whom he ought to serve with a whole heart and a single mind.

Many a man has said to himself, or to his fellows, or his life says for him more plainly than words could express it, "Now when it comes to matters of religion, of Sundays, and things of soul and spirit, I will do as God would have me and serve only Him." "But when it comes to matters of positions and possessions, I am going to do what the world does and what the times demand." "If a man is to get along in business, to accumulate the gold, to have a competence and living, he must do just what the rest of the world does." "I propose to be just as shrewd, just as sharp, just as tricky, deceptive and dishonest in my operations as the rest of them, and no more so." "If I am to gain my positions I must deal in false promises like the rest of the politicians; I must not be above taking my 'rake-off' on the good

things going; I must use the worldly way, if I am to get the worldly rewards." "I do not propose to let my religion interfere with my business; business is one thing and religion is another, and I am not going to allow them to get mixed."

"Don't talk to me about religious principles in business; I'll tell you they don't go. A man must live, and he can't live unless he adapts himself to what the world dictates as the policy and method for the getting of gain." "When it comes to matters of character and spiritual culture, I'll admit the truth, importance and worth of those principles and commands given in Scripture; these I propose to follow and attend to in higher matters, and at certain set intervals and stated times."

"The church, the Sabbath, the prayer-meeting are places where I can attend to these things."

"But I have ambitions, and if a man is to get ahead he must make his own way. . . . I have desires and wants, a family to keep — mouths to be fed, children to be clothed and cared for, and if I don't look out for these no one will." "Men do certain things in business life, in social life, in political life, and unless you comply with these demands you are lost in the race."

This is the way in which men are talking to-day. This is what is called wise, sound, worldly, practical wisdom, and it has the approval of

many, many lives.

But according to Jesus' standard, what is the man who follows this counsel attempting to do? He virtually says, to put the matter plainly, I'll serve both God and Mammon. I believe each has his sphere, his duties, his commands, and each must be recognized.

What is the result? That a man is trying to do that which Christ has just shown to be the impossible.

What is it that oftenest leads men to this course of action? Is it not the over anxiety, lest they or theirs be not fed, clothed, housed, and cared for? This is the reason that nine-tenths of the dishonest men deal dishonestly, not because they love dishonesty itself — they would be freed from it if they could. This is the reason that men live the double life and have only a formal service toward God while they have a whole heart service toward the world. Because they are anxious, because they know the need, because they have a family and multiplied wants every day, because they are not sure that God will care for them. Where are the necessary things coming from? The world answers, from yourself, and must be won according to the worldly way.

This is a grave question, a difficult situation, a hard problem — there is not a man who lives

and who has others dependent on him who has not been brought face to face with the grim facts, and who has not felt the burden of their care.

Now this is the very fear Christ seeks to allay; it is the very problem he seeks to solve, it is the very anxiety he seeks to remove.

His teaching and reiteration and command and reasoning to his disciples, to affirm, is to prove, to persuade them, to convince them, to make sure the contrary — to wit, that God does care, God does provide, eat, drink, clothes, material, temporal “creature comforts” and necessities. And this He does in a very connected, potent line of argument.

Please to observe, “Be not anxious” is a command of the Master, and it can and must be obeyed; “Be not anxious” is the counsel of our Leader and it can and must be followed; “Be not anxious” is the principle of the religion of Christ and it can and must be observed, if we are to be his children. And so he turns to the reasons for not worrying.

We ought not to worry about these things, says our Christ, because real life is more than these things of food and drink. You may have these, all of these, and have them in abundance, but if you have not more than these, then you are not truly living. Do not the lives of the wealthy,

rich, world-filled and world-favored men and women, who are yet dissatisfied, discontented, unhappy and wretched, prove beyond a peradventure that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth"? Have we lived so short a time and have we lived with so little observation as not to have learned that happiness cometh not from without, not from the material, but from within and from the spiritual? If we have not learned that simple truth, turn to even the pagan philosophers and come to know the primer of happiness.

Again, to be concerned chiefly with these things is to be concerned with the secondary things of life, and those lives which are chiefly concerned with secondary things are secondary lives, which, spelled large, mean — failures.

Again, "Don't worry," because it is unnecessary. There is no need for it. Christ here resorts to an *a fortiori* argument — if he cares for those who are inferior and of less importance than you how much the more will he care for you? "Where is your reason?" says the Master. Look at the birds — YOUR Father feeds them, not their Father. He is not their Father, but He is your Father, your heavenly Father. These birds are not His children but His creatures — they are merely the household pets, that must be looked

after. Is it possible that a good father will feed the dog that lies by the fire in the house and will see his own children going hungry? This is the silly conclusion of those who reason that God does not care for you in material things. The argument is this: if God cares for that which is least, how can it be that He will not care for those that are so much more to Him, even his children? O ye of little faith, cannot ye see this?

Please note Christ is not speaking here of Spiritual wants and needs but of meat, drink, clothing; just those necessities that cause the worry and anxiety of life. And in these matters we are the most fortunate of all earth's creatures, for we have a Father.

The argument advances a step further, "Do not worry," because it is FUTILE. There is no good use in it. Worry will not do you any good, in these very particulars in which you are so distressed. God can and God does satisfy our needs, and only God. How many miracles of three years plenty and three years famine, how many miracles of Elijah and the widow's cruse of oil replenished, how many miracles of multiplication of loaves and fishes to feed many thousands, how many weddings where water is changed into wine, how many promises that neither seed time nor harvest shall fail, do we need to teach us that

God can and does control the material forces of the world? The grape and the vine, the wheat and the wine, these things He can give, does give, and takes delight in giving. The very body and souls with their respective needs God has given us. We know that we have hunger and thirst, material needs and temporal wants; we know that we have reasons, affections, wills and appetences of our soul nature. Now if these needs be written in indelible letters in the very constitution of our natures, if we know that we have these needs, God knows it equally well and better than we.

Mark you, Christ is not here speaking against work, not against legitimate activity and right use of the powers, privileges and faculties God has given us, but against *anxiety* and worry in their use. If these needs are to be satisfied, their satisfaction must come from God, and our fretting and fuming will not help one bit. "Which of you being anxious, by your anxiety can add one cubit to his stature?" This is a little thing, isn't it? — a few inches on a man's body? "If then ye are not able to do that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest?"

The thought here is this, fret does nothing but wear away the faith and the life of the fretter, and unfit him for the plain work and duty of life. This is a *reductio ad absurdum*. Keep your-

selves calm and strong, trust your Father, and know that peace which the world cannot give nor take away.

It is not our worry that brings the material things to satisfy our needs. Who gives the seed, who gives the soil? Who gives the command to nature to bring forth? Who fills our barns, our bins, our banks? Ourselves, with our fret and worry? Not much — God does.

Paul may plant — Apollos may water, but God gives the increase. We piously thank God for His gifts at certain stated seasons and the rest of the time worry ourselves sick because we do not really believe that He has any connection with the world of things. Our very ignorance, dependence and inability drives us to the necessity of trusting Him from whom cometh every good gift and every perfect giving. We could see this as clearly as Christ did, were it not for our inborn faithlessness.

Though worry cannot do any good, it certainly can do much harm. It is worry rather than work that is breaking and killing our people to-day. It is worry that is the cause of a whole host of physical, mental and moral ills. In a little work on the subject of "Worry" Dr. C. S. Kinney, who was for over twenty years in charge of the Middletown (New York) State Homeopathic

Hospital, speaking from a pathological standpoint, writes, "There is no faculty of the human mind that worry does not affect. There is no organ of the human body that it may not destroy. It dwarfs the intellect of the child, substitutes doubt for hope and turns the days of childhood into periods that are recalled in after years with sorrow and condemnation. In youth or middle age it foils or puts in jeopardy, every effort of the ambitious, makes failure expected and success a surprise. It is found smiling over the open grave of the suicide." "The ignorance of all that worry is able to accomplish in blocking human efforts is daily seen among the patients entering our state hospitals." In substance, he continues, worry is an open door to the worst ills of the mind; it leads to melancholia, mania, paranoia and paresis. "Worry is first and last a depressant. It may excite for a time but only as an irritant, followed by a depression of the organ excited. It cannot coexist with perfect health." "It has never given bread to the hungry, or money to the needy. It never has helped a man and it will not help you."

Still the argument of the Master advances a step further. "Don't worry," because this is unfilial and faithless. "For," says Christ, "after all these things do the nations seek." That is,

this is the very spirit of worldliness, it is the spirit of the unconverted, the Fatherless, the unlightened; those who are in the darkness and ignorance of sin and of unbelief are the worriers. Those who do not know that their Father is living, living in heaven and caring for them. It is the commonest, crudest, cruelest form of faithlessness. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." What things? These about which He has been speaking thus far; food, clothing, drink, material necessities. Now if He knows and if we know that He knows, what a shame to us it is, what unfilial, faithless conduct on our part to say to ourselves, "Well, if we are to have food and clothing and money, and the good things of this earth, we must get them for ourselves." "Our Father doesn't care about these things. He would as soon see his children die of hunger, or thirst, or want — He's so taken up with spiritual things that these material things are of no account."

O short-sighted, illogical, faithless humanity, so to divide the universe, so to divide the Father, so to distress the soul. What would a good father of earth think of a child who constantly and persistently fretted and worried himself over the thought, "When this meal is over, will I have another? When these clothes are

worn out, am I sure of getting others? Can I trust my father? ”

What must the Father in heaven think of those faithless children who continually ask themselves questions concerning Him? “ Don’t worry ” to-day, says the Christ, for you have a Father who knows of your need for to-day, and will provide for it. And “ Don’t worry ” about to-morrow. Three distinct times does Jesus use the prohibitive phrase, “ Be not anxious ”; the first time, concerning the things we worry about; the second, against worrying for to-day; the third time, against worrying for to-morrow. This last prohibition makes the principle still wider in its application. Do not worry about the future, with all the material necessities and wants that it shall bring.

Where is located our chief worry? Is it about to-day? Look within yourself, look at your friends, listen to old Money-bags as he frets and stews. Is it to-day he’s worrying about? Not at all, he has plenty in the bank, but he worries just the same. “ For,” says he, “ one can never tell what may happen. Now look at the case of Mr.,” etc., etc., etc., etc., And so he keeps himself in a pother. Now, Jesus says, keep yourselves free from this spirit of the world, this spirit of bondage. God knows the future, God provides

for the future, He is still your Father, the same yesterday to-day and forever. If this discourse teaches anything, it teaches just this, that the silver and the gold and the food and the fullness of the earth are at the disposal of the Lord God, He is our Father and we are His children and ought to trust Him.

In this logical way, step by step, the Teacher leads his hearers from the prohibition to the command; from the things that they are so much concerned about, that ought not to concern them, to the things that they are not enough concerned about, which ought most to concern them. But "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." These things ought to be a man's first concern and his chief concern, because they are of the first and highest importance. Because concern in these matters is practical and effective. Most men think that they are here chiefly for food and drink and clothes — Christ says to them, "You are here for light and love and life and training and character — Not for the things material; these are necessary, while you are in the world, but for the things spiritual, for they are of the highest, most lasting worth — these are earth's treasures." And that man who seeks first God and His kingdom is in a position rightly to use, rightly to appreciate and rightly to enjoy all

the other good things of life. Then adds Jesus this promise, this law of the spiritual world, then "all these things shall be added unto you." All things needful shall be yours. The law of the world seems to be, care for the material first and then for the spiritual — the law of the Master is care for the spiritual first and then for the material. This promise seems to be conditional; this relation seems to be causal; this assurance seems to be certain.

To whom does this high teaching apply — to the ill-provided for in material things, to those who have little of this world's goods? No! it applies to all who are his disciples, to all mankind it has a meaning, but observation and reason say to us, that it applies three times over to the poverty-stricken rich. To those who are well cared for, often living in luxury, who have tasted the value of possessions, and who have become so dependent on riches that they would rather have their lives go than their riches, for their riches is their real life. It applies to those who have in any measure experienced the richness of God's care and of God's givings, and will not recognize that these things belong to and have come from Him.

This sermon may well be called a mountain sermon because of the altitude of its moral and

spiritual teachings. And these altitudes are reached in every part of it. Citizens of this kingdom are to be perfect; its laws are to be followed in spirit; its foundation is trust in God; and its children are not to worry. This teaching of a complete trust for material things represents an actuality but also an ideal. It is not easily attainable, yet most highly desirable. It is a great need of this present age. It is an ideal and a reality toward which we must make resolve, put forth effort, bring ourselves up to, in our daily living.

Because it is an ideal, it is not an impossibility. Our true riches lie in an increase of our trust and confidence in the universal care of our Father which is in heaven.

No greater act of betrayal, infidelity or unbelief can be perpetrated than to hold and to go about persuading people that God is not the Provider and Dispenser of meat and drink and raiment, and all material necessities.

CHAPTER XV

LIVE FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF CENSORIOUSNESS

Matt. vii, 1-5

THE office of a judge is a high and noble calling. There is no body of men, which conserves the laws, promotes the public well-being, establishes righteousness and right living, better than a just and faithful judiciary. "The office of a judge is always necessary, in the infancy and manhood of the world; it was a *primæval* institution before any of the other institutions or tribes or cities were much developed; it will continue to become equally important until men become perfectly just."¹

But as the office of a judge is a high office, so it has high requirements. "They must be removed as far as possible from all biases and warping influences. . . . They must have the spirit of the old prophet, who, when a king's messenger said to him, 'Behold now the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth; let thy word, I pray thee, be like the

¹ "Political Science," by T. D. Woolsey, Vol. II, p. 327.

word of one of them and speak that which is good,' replied, 'As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.' " ² They are, in fact, more immediately servants of God than any other men who manage the affairs of a country. The man truly qualified to occupy the office of a judge needs to be richly qualified and nobly endowed. To judge justly he must be a man who has an appreciation of motives, a familiarity with the circumstances of the case, a knowledge of the laws; the skill to make a true application of the legal principles, the grace to eliminate himself, and to pass judgment impartially, without fear or favor. And the responsibility resting upon a judge may well be denominated awful. His is the exacting, difficult task to be just and yet merciful, to be true and yet kind, to condemn and yet to help.

But in spite of these requirements and in the face of such a responsibility, is it not true that nine-tenths of humanity are seeking to climb to the woolsack?

It is to this bold, thoughtless and dangerous ambition of men, this mad desire to seek an office to which they are not called, to covet a place for which they are not qualified, that our Master directs the present words.

² *Ibid.*, p. 331.

In direct opposition to the natural tendency and the constant activity of mankind, Jesus places this categorical command, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Finally and forever the Master with one bold stroke sweeps from man the authority, without which the office of a judge cannot be rightly constituted.

Says Blackstone, in his Commentaries, speaking of the Courts of England, "By our excellent constitution the sole executive power of the laws is vested in the person of the king, it will follow that all courts of justice, which are the medium by which he administers the laws, are derived from the power of the crown."³ "For, whether created by act of parliament, or letters patent, — the king's consent, is — expressly or — impliedly given." This principle applying to the kingdom of England likewise applies to the kingdom of heaven, and in the words of our text the King's own Son expressly denies any authority from the King himself, for an individual man to sit in judgment of his fellows.

Indeed, the Christ who was so qualified to judge that he could say, "If I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me," yet said, "I judge no

³ Chase's Blackstone, edition of 1888, p. 626. In quoting I have omitted certain irrelevant matters indicated by the dashes.

man ”; ⁴ “ For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world ”; ⁵ and who is there who can find an instance in his life on earth where he passed judgment on his fellow men? Now that which he would not do himself, he could not allow his less qualified disciples to do.

The command here given, “ Judge not that ye be not judged,” receives added weight and importance from a consideration of the one who uttered it. These words were spoken by one who knew men, knew life, understood the hearts of his fellows, by one who could make allowances, who saw clearly, judged righteously and spake truly and without fear. They were spoken by a man who looked upon the heart, and could give a right estimate of the lives that appeared before him. This was the one who could say to the bold, confident and boastful Peter: “ Simon, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ”; “ Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.” This is the one who could perceive and mark in a single word the truculent and cowardly character of Herod, “ Go ye and tell that fox.” This is the one who clearly knew that those Pharisees and rulers who should pass judgment upon him and condemn him to death, were

⁴ Jno. viii, 15-16.

⁵ Jno. xii, 47.

merely whited sepulchers filled with the bones of the dead. This, too, is the one who could discern in the woman of Samaria a woman of crass ignorance and acknowledged infamy, a heart that was tender and honest, and a jewel for the crown of the King. And yet this is the same one who says without qualification to those who will be his disciples, "Judge not."

Now while this is a positive command, and of very wide scope, it is not spoken as a principle to guide governments, organizations, polities and rightly constituted authorities, for Jesus elsewhere recognizes the authority and place of Cæsar in the world; but it is spoken to that vast mass of mankind who have become self-constituted judges of the lives of their brethren. And never was a word of counsel more needed, for mankind is prone to separate, divide, classify, characterize and condemn its kind in walk and talk and work and life.

Indeed, if I read and interpret this passage rightly that which is condemned is the spirit of criticism and censoriousness; those who view and judge the lives of their fellows not for the sake of warning, profit or lesson for themselves but for the sake of the condemnation of the brother. It does not mean that we shall not judge, weigh, measure, consider the words, works, and lives of

the men about us that we may take knowledge of them either for profit or warning. The vicarious element of life runs through all forms of human existence. Doubtless many a man has saved his own ship from going to wrack by seeing the bones of his brother's craft, lying a grim warning on the perilous coast. Many a youth has been saved from bad company by seeing the degrading and destructive influences evil companionship has wrought upon good manners. Many a man has been saved from drink by witnessing the disgrace, shame and suffering that intemperance hath wrought in his unfortunate comrade. No! we are not told to walk with our eyes shut — but with our mouths shut; and while we may and must draw conclusions for ourselves from the observation of the lives of others, we are not called upon to publish the results of our observation.

The occupation of public censor and general critic is one of the most popular callings in the world. One reason for its popularity doubtless arises from the fact that it requires the least preparation and training for its accomplishment. Most lines of worthy work call for some schooling or training, but the censorious person stands ready to pass upon the greatest works and the worthiest workmen without any knowledge of the subject or fitness for the task. Censoriousness

is a popular occupation because it is so easy of attainment, no capital is required for entrance to the ranks of the critic of others; no real qualities of manhood or womanhood. Would you be an artist or a musician, one needs patience; a soldier must have courage; a farmer must have industry; a scholar, diligence; a politician, tact; a doctor, knowledge or skill — but to be a public critic all one needs is the brain of a rat and the tongue of a parrot and the work is done to perfection. That this is the easiest work in the world is evidenced because it is the most followed and best accomplished by the indolent, the idler, the looker-on; these hold their august court in the corner grocery or at the meeting of the streets, and amid the plaudits of the ignorant audience the self-elected judge damns a deed or blasts a character with the readiness and indifference of the boy who crushes a bird's egg. Nothing is too sacred, nothing too secret, nothing too difficult, nothing too pure to escape, when once this habit of judging others has laid its fatal spell upon the individual. Now this is the habit and this the practice that the Master condemns and forbids in this passage.

Avoid falling into this habit, says our great Teacher, for it is fatal to the self. "With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with

what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you." If we only could be made to realize that this is absolutely true, more of us would resign from the office of judge. And this is absolutely true. To judge another in word or deed is to give our own standard of word or deed. To measure another is to give our own measure. This is true in those simple, morally colorless judgments which we daily make. Here is one who says of a picture, "Isn't that fine, it suits me to a fraction." In this estimate the man has given the measure and quality of his own artistic taste. There is standing by, perhaps, a real artist, a man who knows pictures and the true canons of art; at once upon hearing this so frankly expressed opinion the artist knows the artistic measure of the man who has spoken; he judged himself in judging the picture. I knew of an instance where a house painter was painting a house; the master of the house thinking that it might lend to the painter's pleasure to see a fine oil painting asked him to step in and view the portrait. The painter did so — and as he stood viewing it with critical eye, the owner said, "That picture cost five hundred dollars." "Goodness!" exclaimed the painter, "there's not ten dollars' worth of paint on it!" This man's idea of art was paint. Out of his own

words he was judged.

Those who in higher things, judge of a man's character, his motives, his life, in this same act of judging reveal their own character, motives, principles of life. This consequence is certain and inevitable, the course of history has proven the truth of the Savior's words. Those unjust men who found Socrates guilty of perverting the youths and polluting the State and who condemned him to drink the hemlock, in their judgment of him judged themselves and have been condemned by their own condemnation. This was the thought that Socrates had when he said to those judges, "Be sure that if you put me to death, who am what I have told you that I am, you will do yourselves more harm than me." . . . "And now I shall go hence, sentenced by you to death; and they will go hence, sentenced by truth to receive the penalty of wickedness and evil."

In that Persian book, "The Gulistan" by Sa'di, the writer gives an incident illustrative of this same judgment of Christ. "A king ordered an innocent person to be put to death. The man said, 'Seek not your own hurt by venting any anger you may entertain against me.' The king asked, 'How?' He replied, 'The pain of this punishment will continue with me for a moment, but the sin of it will endure with you forever.

The period of this life passes by like the wind of the desert. Joy and sorrow, beauty and deformity, equally pass away. The tyrant vainly thought he did me an injury, but round his neck it clung and passed over me.' "

Says Jesus, in his teaching, the office of judge is a work too perilous for a man to enter upon.

He here intimates that in kind and degree as we judge and deal with our brethren so shall God deal with us. The measures with which we measure shall measure us, the scales in which we weigh the lives of our fellows shall be the same in which we are weighed. This is the plain meaning of the principle, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." This is the lesson of the merciless servant of the parable recorded in Matt. xviii, 21-35. If we fully realized that when we were passing upon the works, words and lives of our fellow beings we are really passing upon ourselves, how just, gentle and generous would our judgments be, for every man is charitable and filled with excuses for his own shortcomings.

Continues our Teacher, this practice of judging the lives of others is unfair to the brother. "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" This is an altogether dis-

proportionate and unwarrantable proceeding. We are so anxious to remove the splinters, the motes, the little offenses, from the brother's life, that we fail to remember that there is a greater offense in our own lives. This term "mote" or "splinter" plainly points the common field of criticism and censoriousness. It is not in the great principles of life that we commonly judge the brother but in the little things, the smaller faults, the peccadillos. We are reminded of the system formerly prevailing in some country schools and perhaps practiced in some places to-day, of appointing a monitor, usually the good boy, to observe and see when and how the scholars transgress the laws of the school. This worthy lad keeps his holy eye open for slight offenses, whispering, passing of notes, copying lessons and the like; these offenses he notes and anon with joy reports to the authorities. The result is the cultivation of at least one prig and pious fraud within that schoolroom. It is the school monitor system as applied to the world against which Jesus is inveighing. No man, says he, has the right to assume this position, because every man has a beam, a whole log of wood, an entire block of offenses which completely blind his own vision. Observe, this is a general declaration, and applies distributively to

every man. Now the man who himself is thus disqualified is in no position to judge justly of his brother's slight offenses. What man is there who understands the motives, the circumstances of the life, the hereditary weaknesses of his brother?

No man comprehends the life of another in the complete round of its circle — we see some little arc of the life as indicated in a word or a deed, but our geometry is not skilled enough to find the center of the circle from that arc. Here, for instance, is a lad who has gone astray, who is walking the wayward path. Listen to the judgment of that lad's life from the lips of outsiders; they unqualifiedly criticise and condemn him — they judge the thing in itself and unrelated to the lad. Bring this same waywardness, these same facts, to the notice of a father or a mother of the boy, and either of these will judge with charity and with leniency — he knows, she knows, how much of the self is appearing in the child — and love sits on the bench of justice. Thank God, we are not to be judged by our fellows, nor yet by the world — but that judgment is to be given by a Father who knows the entire round of the life, and Love sits upon the judgment seat of the universe.

Moreover, such criticism and judgment of our

brethren is an offense against the truth. It assumes that which is not true — a clear eye, a blameless life, a position of superiority in the one who would play the judge, a catalogue of qualities true of no mortal man.

Instead of sitting in judgment on the conduct of others, our Savior points out something more important and pressing for us to do. In short, to hold to the figure of the eye, get busy with your own eyes. I presume there is no such thing as a physically perfect eye. Helmholtz, who was familiar with this common fact, once said that he could easily conceive how the organ of the eye could be made a far more perfect instrument of sight than it is. Here the great Spiritual Oc-
culist tells us, in unqualified terms, that there is no such thing as a spiritually perfect eye. There is a beam in the eye of every man, is his unconditioned statement, and man's first and great business is to correct and perfect his own sight. His strong ironical way of putting it is, "Then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye"; his plain implication is, "When thou dost see clearly, then thou shalt understand that to assume such a position would be to become a hypocrite, and thou wilt leave the correction of the eyes of thy brethren to the care and correction of the Great Physician." Our na-

tures are sinful and imperfect, we are all stricken with a moral blindness. Until this condition is removed we are in no position to judge our brethren, and when it is removed we will have no wish to judge them.

History is filled with instances of those who revealed their moral blindness by sitting in judgment of their fellows. Witness the blindness of the Pharisees, who cast out the man born blind because he believed in the Physician who had healed him. Hear Christ's answer to these very Pharisees when they asked, "Are we blind also?"—asked sarcastically, asked with a sneer, asked in derision, but answered by the Christ, frankly, plainly, truly: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth."⁶ Behold the moral and spiritual blindness of those rulers of the Jews, who counted the best citizen of Palestine, the most worthy and useful member of their nation, as meriting crucifixion. And from that day to this how history has recorded and revealed the contemptible conceit and the stone-blindness of almost every court of religious inquiry, every inquisition, and trial for faith that has sat upon a bench in condemnation of its brethren. We might make bold to say, that the roll call of the

⁶ Jno. ix, 41.

honorable and faithful in the church to-day is the list of the condemned and outcast of yesterday. At all events, that every man has a beam in his eye and is in no position to rightly judge his neighbor, history without contradiction evidences. There has been only one without sin, only one with the spiritually perfect vision, only one fit to judge. What was his attitude toward a palpable, proven sinner? "And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery,"⁷ and Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And the only one without sin, the only one fit to cast the stone at her said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." The plain teaching of this passage is that we are not to take such exact notice of our brother's fault, but to be more careful in noting our own faults. We are here taught the value of self-examination. Put over against, "With what judgment ye judge (another) ye shall be judged," the counsel of Paul, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,"⁸ and we see the only safe course for a man.

Says the moralist Seneca, "It is dangerous for a man too suddenly or too easily to believe him-

⁷ Jno. viii, 3-11.

⁸ I Cor. xi, 31.

self. Wherefore let us examine, watch, observe and inspect our own hearts, for we ourselves are our own greatest flatterers. We should every night call ourselves to an account. Our vices will abate of themselves if they be brought every day to the shrift." ⁹

What an absurd, inconsistent and wicked thing to see a man sitting in judgment of his fellows in those matters wherein he himself is guilty. "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest that a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" ¹⁰ Answer this catechism with thy deeds and thy life, an thou canst; pass this examination, for the bench, if thou art able — then shalt thou be saved from that greatest of offenses, hypocrisy. "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," is an oft repeated warning, which is meant to ring through the years of all time, a terror to the critical and the censorious, a doom to the self-elected judge.

There is a corollary attaching to this princi-

⁹ "The Morals of Seneca."

¹⁰ Rom. ii, 21-23.

ple which the Master has just propounded; namely, be tolerant and charitable. As the Scotch say, every man must "dree his own weird," and, runs the Scripture, every soul must work out his own salvation; this is the privilege and this is the duty of living. The consequence is, as this is every man's individual right, so there is an obligation on the part of every other not to interfere with but to help his brother in this life work. My prime duty is to attend to my own business and to have charity toward others who are seeking to do the same.

The principle underlying the text, "Am I my brother's keeper?" we believe has been made to work overtime, and has resulted in our judging others and in our insisting in plucking the splinters from their eyes, when we had been better engaged in looking after our own lives. As much as we regret to acknowledge it, it is not altogether untrue, that Christian people and the Christian Church are particularly inclined toward fault-finding, criticism and censoriousness.

CHAPTER XVI

LIVE FOR THE BEST WITHIN YOU

Matt. vii, 6

JESUS was prone to utter hard sayings, to declare startling things, to teach the paradoxical, to command the apparently impossible. Listen as he says that except a man hate his father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children, he cannot be his disciple; as he declares that a man must lose his life to save it; as he commands, "Be ye therefore perfect"; as he counsels, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth." Surely these are hard sayings, paradoxes, startling teachings and commands seemingly impossible.

These utterances are not void of meaning but the meaning does not appear upon the surface. It was doubtless his purpose that thought would reveal or time would disclose the hidden, fuller meaning of these teachings — as one must dig for gold, or dive for pearls, or work for anything that is truly worth having.

It is safe to say that he did not intend to teach the esoteric or the mysterious — but he

sought to present before men's minds plain and practical truths in forceful sentences. Such an utterance is this contained in the words, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine," etc.

The common interpretation men have given to this passage is that the Gospel truth is not to be given to the unappreciative, the unreceptive, the brutish, but is to be reserved for the chosen few who are able to understand it. With this interpretation we cannot agree, because it is too narrow; it regards what may be a fruit of the text but does not go to the root of the text; again we cannot agree with it, because it seems to us to be opposed to the very spirit of the Gospel, for by its application no man would be accounted worthy to receive these high and heavenly truths — for no man is able rightly to appreciate them. Indeed, the great business of the Church is to go among the base, the dull, the unappreciative and to make them to see and to know and to understand. By this interpretation Jesus would never have come into the world — for surely the Pearl of heaven was despised, rejected and trampled under foot of men.

But even if one does not go so far as to reject this common interpretation, yet this interpretation does not exhaust the full teaching here given.

In this text there is a principle, broad, deep and far-reaching. So if we take the teaching as applying to Life, for Life is the great theme of this entire discourse, the wider interpretation will include the narrower, and the more progressive view will embrace that which has been held.

The great principle of this text is very plain — it is here stated in a negative form — put it into the positive form and it reads “Put things to their proper and appropriate uses like wise men”! A place for everything and everything in its place is a principle that has its warrant and proof in the constitution of nature. In nature we observe that everything has a place, a use, a function and a right relation. From this arises the order and intelligibility of the world, and upon this depends the possibility and utility of science and the entire round of human knowledge. The very word “nature” speaks to us of that which is orderly, regular and constant. The term natural law, which we use so frequently, rests upon the fact of things having places and uses — and of their being in the right relations to the sum total of created entities.

We find that the world is a system interrelated and interdependent, and there is no more interesting or profitable employ for the powers and faculties of men than to discover the place, re-

lation and uses of the multitude of forces and things which come under the observation of man. This is the great business of science. Every part of the sphere bears some relation to every other part, atom is related to atom, force to force; and the activities and interrelations of these are found to be capable of expression in definite, constant, unchangeable formulæ called laws. The teleological argument of theism, for the presence in the universe of an intelligence capable of accounting for this order and adaptation of means to ends, is based upon the principle of this text.

This teleological argument, however much criticised and contested, will ever be acceptable and efficient as evidencing an intelligence back of the intelligible, because its facts are so apparent to the common observer and its principles so in accord with our common life.

Illustrations of adaptations and fitness of means to ends, as evidencing this principle of place and function in the world of nature, might be adduced without limitation, but it is a matter familiar to the minds of those who have studied the subject even a little.

It is this same principle which underlies the argument of Paul to the Corinthian church, and of Menenius to the Roman mob, in the parable of the belly and the members. Says the Apostle,

“For the body is not one member but many. . . . But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”¹ Therefore, we say that the very idea of law and of nature, of system and of a universe, rests upon the principle implied in this text, that everything has a place and a proper and appropriate use, in the world which God has made.

It is further taught in this text that if things are not put to their proper use, place and relation, they are perverted, prostituted, misused and so must suffer the consequence of everything that is out of order.

And here we detect a very plain divergence between the world of nature and the world of men. In nature things cannot, rightly speaking, get out of place nor break law. In nature the stars in their courses, the forces in their paths, the atoms in their affinities, are held in by bit and bridle, are restrained and controlled by the cords and bands of their being. No force ever contravened law, no atom ever left its place or forgot its function; as one has said, “An atom out of its place and the universe would be changed.” It is because of their fidelity, to personify nature, to the law of their being, that “the heavens declare the

¹ I Cor. xii, 14 and 18.

glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." But when we come to the world of man, we see a different thing — man is endowed with the royal gift of personality, he is a free moral agent, he has will and can choose. Man can transgress law, violate law, refuse to obey law; that is, he can refuse to accept the higher law of his well-being and choose to follow the law of ill-being. Therefore it is that man is a subject fit to be counseled, commanded, advised; therefore the direction, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs," etc., is peculiarly applicable to man. And it is from the viewpoint of man and of personality that Christ is speaking.

The great business of a man is to know himself, as the philosophers discovered ages ago; now if man can discover the meaning of life, the purpose of faculties, powers, organs and functions — if he can know the right use of himself in part and *in toto* — then the business of a wise man is to make that right use of himself. And this is the heart of the counsel here given.

Assuming that right place and use of man in his various parts can be discovered, and this is the underlying idea of this entire sermon of the Master, then it follows that nothing can be put to a better use than that for which it was intended; and nothing ought to be put to a baser

use than that for which it was intended. On this last inference the emphasis is here laid by Christ. This is to show lack of wisdom, it is to give that which is holy unto the dogs, and this ever entails loss.

Jesus teaches elsewhere that he came "to seek and to save that which was lost"—through violation of this very precept. Now "loss" or "lost" is a word of varying degrees, as Jesus uses and illustrates the term. It is a relative term, and one that varies with varying persons. In one sense "lost" means out of possession; so we commonly use the term with respect to things, and so Christ used the term with respect to persons—this he illustrated by the woman who had lost one of the coins with which she was wont to adorn her head. It was out of her possession and not in the place it should be and so she searched the house until she found it. "Lost" again means out of position; those sheep, which in the night should be enfolded in the fold under the care and protection of the Shepherd, were not in their proper place, wandering abroad in the wilderness, in the cold and in danger; so the Good Shepherd seeks the sheep that he may bring them back to their rightful place by the Shepherd's side.

"Lost" again means out of right relation;

this is illustrated by the parable of the Lost Son; that son was out of right relation to the Father and to his house, when he was in the far country and among strangers engaged in the humiliating and degrading occupation of feeding swine. When he came back to the Father's heart and to the Father's home, he was "found," because he had returned to the right relation to the Father. This parable, this meaning of the term "lost," is particularly applicable to the realm of the personal.

Now to be out of possession, out of position, out of right relation, is inappropriate, offensive to good taste and, in the realm of the personal, is perilous to a degree. The idea of inappropriateness is plainly implied in the words, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine."

It is the same idea that is contained in the proverb, "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

That which is bad taste and inappropriate may be hard to define in words, but it is something that is immediately perceived by a cultivated sensibility. I knew of a man who was a collector of old furniture; once he found a beautiful mahogany sideboard, used by its present owners for a hencoop. His sense of propriety was plainly

offended that so beautiful and so useful an article should be put to such ignoble uses. How would an artist be offended by discovering a genuine Gainsborough or Reynolds painting, adorning a stable! What a misuse it would be of the family jewels, for the son to take them from their sacred keeping and to give them for the adorning of an harlot! Now it is this same good taste that is offended, and this same base and frivolous character that is revealed by the man who will cast his pearls before swine, but now accompanied by the sad consequence of ruthless destruction of the foolish man who will dare such a thing.

Jesus is here speaking to men and speaking of man, and he teaches in this text that there is in every man that which is holy. Is this not emphasized in all the Scripture? Man is made by God, made in His image, made little less than divine, crowned with glory and honor, made capable of being a king. The Spirit of God dwelleth within man and so man is a holy being. While *things* may be called holy, by an accommodation of terms, only persons are truly holy, for holiness is a quality of will and of character, holiness is an attribute of personality alone. We speak of the Holy Land; why is this called holy? Only because of the holy persons, the devout,

noble, god-like men and women that have lived there. We speak of the "holy place," which is the temple. There is no place as such, which is holy; it is only because of its holy associations and uses, only because of the holy Spirit which inhabits that temple. This is likewise true of those books which we have called the Holy Bible, it is holy because of the holy Persons which it reveals, true because of the holy lives which it makes. Yes, the teaching here and elsewhere in Scripture is that man is a holy being — and within every man there is that which must be called holy.

There is a pearl in every life. It was this new idea which Jesus introduced in his religion. In former times certain men and certain classes were counted worthy, and certain men and certain classes were counted worthless. Jesus would sweep away this old, false notion, and reveal that God is the Maker of them all, and every person is capable of immortality. It was this teaching that introduced a new conception of man and gave a new dignity to life. How often has this fact of a pearl in every life been revealed in the basest and lowest of men. Here is a dissolute worthless fellow, who is a shame to his family and a menace to the community, in a moment, in an hour of peril he reveals a courage, a self-

sacrificing spirit, a willingness to lay down his life to save others if you will, from a burning building or from a stranded ship — and the pearl within him stands revealed.

These are facts of common life and experience, these are elements made use of by novelist and dramatist. Charles Dickens, in the best novel he ever wrote, "The Tale of Two Cities," has made most excellent use of such a character. Sidney Carton was a prodigal, profligate, base fellow; a burden to himself, a disgrace to his associates. What good was there in him? What worth in his life? And yet, such as he was, on occasion he was capable of a friendship which enabled him to renounce his love for the sake of his friend, capable of a devotion which led him to the guillotine, a vicarious sacrifice, to save another's life. Most dramatic, most touching, but most true. Even base men are capable of holy deeds. Why, it is this very belief that souls are pearls and lives are holy that gives the spring and spur to missionary enterprise; it is the recognition of this fact that inspires the lovers of their kind to go into the slums and sinks of the city and save those whom the multitude of men are passing by as worthless and lost.

That which is undertaken by men as a work of rescue is here urged by the Master as a work

of prevention. Says he, that man who does not live for the highest and best within him is guilty of giving the holy unto the dogs and of casting pearls before swine. Life was intended for the highest uses, the man who perverts these uses prostitutes this life. It is not necessary for us in this case to go aside as so many have done and seek to specify just who are meant by "swine" and by "dogs." It does not necessarily apply to Jews nor to Gentiles, to Protestants nor to Romanists. The emphasis of this utterance is not laid on the unworthiness of those to whom the precious things are so thoughtlessly given, but on the thoughtlessness, the unwisdom and the madness of the man who does not recognize his own worth, of the person who is not aware of his high calling of God. Our attention is fixed on the foolish fellow who is so ready to squander, to throw away the very richest and best he has even before those who are incapable, unappreciative and brutish. This is Christ's call to a man to realize his nobility; to know that he is born for the purple, and is destined to be a king. The world would make a man believe that he is fatherless, friendless, poor and worthless — until it brings the man to its own low level. The Christ would have each man know that he is the son of a king, richly endued and endowed and

capable of great things. Man is gifted with a wondrous body capable of great perfection, of high and holy uses. The hands, the feet, the eyes, the lips of the Master were such as we have, but we count them holy because of their blessed employ. The body likewise is capable of great perversion and misuse. Those East Indian fanatics, who in their devotion to a false religion bind their arms, their feet, their members, until they become atrophied and dead to use, sadly misuse the body. That fair young girl, the most beautiful and soul-stirring of God's creations, who devotes her body to the service of lust — has even according to our common proverb, "gone to the dogs," and abused a holy possession.

The mind, the gift of God, is capable of knowing the will of God, of serving the brother, of becoming the glory of its possessor — but it, too, may be perverted, abused, degraded. Oh, what a sad sight to see the human heart, fit dwelling-place for the true, the beautiful and the good, capable of housing God Himself, thrown open to the reception and filling of the world. Heart-breaking sight it is to see bodies, minds, hearts, lives, capable of heavenly and holy things, despised and devoted to base and ignoble uses. Do not be guilty of such folly and unwisdom, for the life is wrecked and the man is destroyed who does it.

This principle finds its concrete illustration in Christ's most perfect parable, that of The Lost Son — the story of that young man who bore his Father's image, who was competent to be his Father's associate, companion, friend, son; who was capable of knowing his Father's mind and working his Father's will, whose right place and relation was in his Father's home and under his Father's love; who was privileged to honor, pleasure and fellowship, yet who, because he was unappreciative of the riches that were his, dead to the opportunities that were offered to him, asks for his patrimony, goes into a far country, wastes his substance in riotous living, until he comes to be a caretaker of swine.

Such a man, Jesus teaches us in this text, is unappreciative of himself, of his place, power, possibilities, worth. These are like the "profane" Esau, who for a mess of pottage sold his birth-right. These are they who forget what manner of Spirit they are of. This text is Christ's call to self-appreciation.

Such a man, the Master teaches, is unappreciated among the dogs and the swine. He may have engaging manners, a keen intellect, a sensitive nature, and cultivated powers, but what does the low and worthless company care for these? These are they who regard neither mind, spirit

nor character in a man — they are materialists, sensualists, slaves of the flesh; they seek not him but his; the most worthy and accomplished man to such is only a tree to be robbed of its fruit, a purse to be relieved of its coin, a hive to be rifled of its sweets — and when they have possessed themselves of those goods he bears, the man himself is cast out, with heartless jest and ruthless hand, to be trampled upon and to perish as he may.

These obtuse, unappreciative and insensible creatures have been limned in Rudyard Kipling's striking and shocking verse, "The Vampire":

"A fool there was and he made his prayer
 (Even as you and I)
 To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair
 (We called her the woman who did not care),
 But the fool he called her his lady fair
 (Even as you and I).

O the years we waste, and the tears we waste,
 And the work of our head and hand,
 Belong to the woman who did not know
 (And now we know that she never could know)
 And did not understand.

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The fool was stripped to his foolish hide
 (Even as you and I!)
 Which she might have seen when she threw him aside—
 (But it isn't on record the lady tried)
 So some of him lived but the most of him died—
 (Even as you and I!)

And it isn't the shame, and it isn't the blame
 That stings like a white hot brand.
 It's coming to know that she never knew why
 (Seeing at last she could never know why)
 And never could understand.

How pitiable it is, to see a soul capable of such high things fallen to so low an estate, through failure to heed the warning of the Christ, through disregard of the high calling of God. How many verifications have there been in life of the Master's prediction, "Lest haply they trample them under their feet and turn and rend you."

François Villon is a classic case in point; poet, *littérateur*, soldier, thief and murderer; capable of companying with the world's highest and best, choosing his fellowship with the lowest and basest of men, a figure dramatic and dreadful — a true type of a melancholy class. None of God's creatures can rise so high as man and none can fall so low.

In short, in this text Jesus urges: Do not despise thyself; do not estimate thyself lightly; do not let another count thee of little worth; "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

"Beloved now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

Wise and blessed is that man who hears and heeds this call of the Master, to live worthy of the Godlike spirit that is within him.

CHAPTER XVII

LIVE THROUGH THE POWER THAT IS WITHOUT YOU

Matt. vii, 7-11

IN the passages which have preceded this and in the principles which have been exhibited in this great Discourse, the Master has taught a hard lesson. He has prescribed a difficult course for his learners; marked out a very straight and narrow way of life for those who are to follow after him; he has made a demand for great power, if one is to do and to live after this pattern.

He has told those who are learning from him that if they are to live the life worth living, that if they are to possess his religion, they are to live a perfect life, a true life, a pure life, etc., that they are to be free from avarice, double-mindedness, worry and censoriousness. In short, they are to do those very things for which they have no natural desire and to refrain from doing those very things for which they have such a strong desire.

No man who thinks can deny the excellence, the importance of this way of life. No man who

appreciates the meaning of the message but instinctively exclaims, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" He is like the man who stands at the foot of the lofty Alps, beholds their snowy heights, discerns their steep acclivities, and while he is gazing, comes one who says, "Yonder lie the broad visions, the pure air, the worthy places to be; friend, I bid thee climb."

"Aye" answers the gazer, the aspirant, "thither lies the spot to which I would fain attain — to be desired, demanded by thyself and myself, but how shall one, so weak, so ignorant, so fearful as I, climb those dizzy heights?"

The life mapped out in these teachings of Christ, no man can deny to be true, good — thither lies the blessed life, any man would do well to ascend these moral and spiritual heights; but how? Whence the strength? Who or what will enable? "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not."

To this practical inquiry, to this human, commendable, desire, the Master now makes answer. This answer is written in the words, "Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek — knock," and in this answer we find a counsel that is both natural and true to the world in which we live.

Man is a dependent creature, not self-existent, self-sustaining, self-sufficient or self-empowering.

He is a being of needs, wants and desires. How dependent a creature is man, we fail at times to remember, because we become so boastful of the things he can do and of the things he has done. We are like little children who have been brought up in a home supplied with everything that the heart can wish or mind devise — these things lie at our hands supplied by the free gift of another — all we have to do is to reach out our hand and take that which another has provided, and in the confusion of our thinking we come to consider that the taking is the creating, and the receiving is the giving — and that we are independent and self-supporting. It would be well for us at times to view the other side of the question, and to realize that we have nothing that we have not been given, and are nothing that we have not been made.

Every man is dependent upon such simple things as air and light and heat; food and water and clothing; knowledge and music and art; love and life and spirit. All these things are necessities of our natures. Take away the simplest and most elemental of these gifts and man lives but a little while; take away the more spiritual and intellectual of them and man lives but a little life.

Now, what is true of man is true of all the rest

of living beings. Not only is man dependent but all living things are dependent, and the power to live comes not from within the organism but from without. Note it; the power to live comes not from within but from without.

There is not a plant that grows that does not rejoice in borrowed strength and borrowed glory — its beauty is from the sun, its health is from the soil, its well-being is dependent upon the gifts of the heavens and the earth. As the plant is dependent in that degree proportionate to the complexity of the life it manifests, so the animal, being more highly organized and capable of expressing a nobler degree of life, is still more dependent than the plant. And man, who is wont to boast himself as the king of all creation, is, in truth, because he is the highest of all created beings, at the same time the most dependent and the most indebted, for every breath he breathes and for every manifestation he gives, to every realm of this created universe. How dependent he is, the great debt he owes, the study of nature and of science more and more reveals.

How truly and quaintly has Sir Thomas Browne in his "Religion Medici" expressed the thought of man's dependence on food for his power to live physically. Says he, "All flesh is grass, is not only metaphorically but literally true; for all

those creatures we behold are but the herbs of the field, digested into flesh in them, or more remotely carnified in ourselves. Nay, further, we are what we all abhor, Anthropophagi and cannibals, devourers not only of men but of ourselves; and that not in an allegory but a positive truth; for all this mass of flesh we behold came in at our mouths; this frame we look upon hath been upon our trenchers; in brief, we have devoured ourselves."

Moreover, view the matter from the broadest standpoint and we discover that even the power in the earth, which is the power of the things on the earth, is from without itself. The grass which clothes our fields, the flowers which deck the sward, the trees which shade the flowers, the animals which browse upon tree and grass, and man himself, king of them all, all trace their strength directly to the great king of day, and we are in short but children of the sun. Thus we see that all creation is dependent, and that power to live is not from within but from without the organism.

This brings us at once to the question, What do we mean by life? From the physical standpoint, life is plainly not defined but described in the so-called definition given by Herbert Spencer.

"Life is the definite combination of heterogene-

ous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external coexistences and sequences." *Principles of Biology*, Vol. I, p. 74. Herbert Spencer.

In its simpler form it means that life is correspondence with environment. This tells not what life is but what life does. Life, then, is the continual process of appropriating the power which is without to the being which is within. Therefore, the living organism is simply a complex and interrelated system of agencies for appropriating, assimilating and distributing this power which is about us to the man which is within us.

As we study and examine these living organisms from the lowest to the highest we find them all possessed of those instruments, agents, organs, now called lungs, now heart, now circulatory and now nervous systems, but all working to the common end to enable us to receive and use the power which is within this earth we inhabit.

In the Scripture which is before us, Christ tells us that that which is true of the physical world is likewise true of the spiritual.

What is the meaning of worship in all its forms, from the most primitive to the most complex and civilized, but an evidence of man's feeling of spiritual dependence? This is the fact evidenced by

the Assyrian and the Chaldean, the Greek and the Roman, in their sacrifices; this is the evidence of the Aztec teocallis with its altar and smoking sacrifice; this is the evidence of the ancestor worship of the Chinese; this the evidence, most concretely put, of the fetichism of the west-coast African. The worshiper of the Congo region believes that by some process which he does not clearly understand this spiritual power has been made to enter into a small portable object; this is the nexus between him and that spiritual power which he recognizes to be without him, and which he would appropriate and apply to the daily need of his mysterious life.

So elemental and so universal a fact is this sense of dependence in all forms of religious practice that Schleiermacher has given as the core and tap-root of religion the feeling of dependence.

No man, in the sphere of the spirit is self-sufficient and self-sustaining more than in the sphere of the flesh. The power for living in both must come from without rather than from within. And this is the teaching of Scripture.

Said Jesus to his disciples, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you."¹ Said Jesus of himself, "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father

¹ Acts i, 8.

do.”² In accord with this thought is the apostle’s teaching, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”³ This is the import of Christ’s argument with Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again. . . . Except a man be born of water and the Spirit.”⁴ This surely is the interpretation of the striking figure from the physical world of the branch and the vine. The branch that is cut off from the vine is cut off from the source of power; that cut off from the source of power cannot bear fruit — it is dead. Therefore, “Abide in me as the branch abideth in the vine.”

Moreover, one great purpose of Scripture is to reveal to men the fact, the nearness and the character of the spiritual environment in which man dwells. This is the heart of the teaching of the law, the prophets and the history. This is the lesson of such an incident as that of Elisha and the young man imprisoned in Dothan. These two see about the city the forces of the king of Syria. The young man is fearful, weak, ready to surrender; Elisha prays that the eyes of the young man may be opened that he may see that which is the fact; his eyes are opened, “And behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots

² Jno. v, 19.

³ Philip. iv, 13.

⁴ Jno. iii, 5-7.

of fire round about Elisha.”

This certainly is the meaning of the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, a guide, guard and protection to wandering Israel.

This is the heart of the message of Christ — the spiritual is near to man; God dwells not only in the heavens but on the earth; He dwells in the midst of and is the helper of His people. And this is the testimony of godly men to-day.

One further thought, a little aside from the direct question but strikingly interesting. As no form of life is self-sufficient and self-sustaining, so no form of life is able to raise itself to the higher form which is above it. If the mineral world is to be possessed with that mysterious power called life, it can only be done by the vegetal life reaching down and touching the mineral with the touch of life. If the vegetal is to rise to a higher level of being it is only by the animal appropriating and endowing it with the qualities of a higher organism. Likewise, if man is to be raised to the order of spiritual beings, it is only by the spiritual reaching down and touching and giving the gift of spiritual life. This is the deeper meaning of the descent of the Son of God to earth; this is the meaning and purpose of the descent of the Spirit.

These facts, therefore, which are implied in

this command of Christ, being admitted, we are further taught that it is the wise man who recognizes this great law and acts in accord with it. An obligation is laid upon man by this explicit command of the Master: Ask — seek — knock. This is the call to a man to be up and doing; to get into right relation to that power which is without him, by an exercise of that divine gift of will which is within him.

This command comes with the greater propriety and reason because man is equipped with the capability of responding to this demand of his spiritual environment. We are now in the realm of the personal, of that being endowed with the qualities of self-consciousness and self-determination. And a responsibility obtains to such an one, which does not obtain in other lesser beings. The plant cannot determine its own conditions, cannot regulate its own environment — man can. The plant cannot set itself in right relations or, more accurately speaking, into wrong relations with its surroundings — man can. Man, like all other living beings, is equipped with the means of coming into right relations with the totality of his surroundings; therefore, where there is ability there is responsibility; hence the propriety of counsel and command. Thus are we made to see that as there is a natural body or organism, through

which is mediated to a man the power physical which is without him, so there is a spiritual body or organism, through which man comes into touch with the spiritual power which is without him. And the spiritual body is the complex and inter-related system of agencies for appropriating, assimilating and distributing spiritual power — that the man may be alive spiritually. Therefore, teaches the Master, the man has something to do for himself in the realm of the spiritual.

The Power is without us, about us; man's business is to appropriate it.

God never meant that a man should be idle; physically, mentally or morally. He must work if he would live, ask if he would receive, seek if he would find, knock if he would have it opened unto him.

The principle of coöperation is a fundamental law of life. God never meant that a man should be a failure through a lack of power; and He never meant that he should have power without asking for it. God stands ever ready to help — and man's great business is to grasp the hand that is stretched out toward him. We are to be yoked together with God while living our life in this world.

The command of the text is only one form of the command given in various ways in all life.

Hunger is God's call to physical labor; curiosity is God's call to mental activity; aspiration is God's call to spiritual activity. Behold the man tending and tilling the ground. What is he doing? Asking for food — and food is power. Behold the student poring over the pages of the learned writer, or peering through the eye of the microscope. What is he doing? Seeking for knowledge, and knowledge is power. Behold the worshiper on his knees, or standing and singing praises, or studying over the inspired Word of Truth. What is he doing? Knocking at the gate of heaven that he may come into the presence of the Spirit of God, and the Spirit is power.

If a man is to live — if he is to be saved in his living in any one of these spheres of human existence, it must be by his working out his own salvation. And this the man should do the more readily, cheerfully and willingly, "For it is God which worketh with you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," and this is the teaching of the remainder of this passage.

Says the Master, to the man who obeys this command God responds, and with such an one God coöperates. What simple and ample evidence we have of this in the everyday affairs of the world about us. Is it not eminently true in the field and the garden, that while one may plant

and another may water, it is God who giveth the increase? God coöperates with the tiller of the soil. Is it not eminently true in the cultivation of the mind? He who trains, exercises, develops his faculties, shall receive the return of his labor because God has so willed it. And "what a world of profit and delight, of power, knowledge and omnipotence, is open to the studious artisan!" In the texts the certainty of the response is certified by Christ. This fact is taught, and repeated in the very words of the passage, "It shall be given unto you," "Ye shall find," "It shall be opened unto you." "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

The fact again is taught in a figure. Christ here reasons, as so often he did, from the familiar, common, accepted relations of men to each other, to their relations to God and His relations to them.

Ask the boy what is the meaning of his father, and will he not tell you, if he has thought at all about the subject, that he is the provider and helper? Ask him what is the chief business of the father and will he not answer to give, provide, furnish, in short, to empower?

Moreover, says the Master, as the fact of the response is certain, so the quality of the response

is guaranteed by the character of the Giver. His reasoning is this: Bad fathers know how to give good gifts. And is it not a fact, proven by experience, that even evil men wish, desire and work for better conditions and higher ideals for their children than they do for themselves? Ofttimes is it evidenced that evil fathers purpose and do better for their sons than for themselves. Again, says our Teacher, it is against the very spirit and nature of a father to trick and deceive his son. "Or what man is there of you, who if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent?" So the reasoning hurries to its blessed, reassuring conclusion — if evil fathers will give their children good gifts, certainly good fathers will give good gifts, and your heavenly Father must give the best gifts, or, as Luke has it, the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Therefore ask, seek, knock; do your part, knowing that God has done His before you have begun yours; knowing that He is not only your God but your Father. Work out your own high destiny, live up to the ideals which I have set before you, because God is near at hand, working with you, to accomplish His good pleasure for you and within you.

CHAPTER XVIII

LIVE FOR THE BEST WITHIN OTHERS

Matt. vii, 12

SPEAKING broadly, up to this point, Jesus has been preaching the Gospel of Christian Egoism. He has been talking to the individual and of the individual. He has taught the worth of the individual, the need of the individual and the possibilities and blessed life open to the individual. He has considered the man in himself, and the influences, forces, relations and activities to which the man must adjust himself, and which affect the man as the center of life. He has exhibited what the man, as an individual, is to do, to avoid and to be.

This treatment of the theme is logical, sensible, sound. Every man begins and must begin his acquaintance with life, from himself as center. It is a man's first duty truly to love himself.

But now it becomes necessary to change the viewpoint, to take a little broader scope of thought, to lay emphasis on the "other man," lest the individual become warped, one-sided, selfish, foolish in his thought and conduct. Altruism

must have a place in all right thinking and in all right living. One man is no man; a man is what he is only in relation to others, and the wise and right thinking man will recognize this fact and live his life according to the facts.

Altruism is not a contradictory but a complement of egoism. As the law runs a man must love himself — but he does not truly love himself unless he loves his neighbor as himself. This sums up the whole law on the manward side. Therefore, for the moment the Master focuses the attention of his hearers on the law which dictates what shall be our relation to our neighbor, and this theme he presents in those wonderful words which have been commonly and rightly called The Golden Rule — which is the Greatest Law in the World.

Now, is it not apparent that this rule recognizes and declares what is a fact — that is, the complex nature of humanity? Human society is not simple but complex, and man exists in necessary relations to others.

This is in perfect harmony with all other created things in this universe. The earth represents a unity in variety. There is a variety in form, color, sound, function, and from this variety comes the complexity and the completeness of the present system of things. In this vast system,

things are dependent one on another, and things are related one to another. And the possibility, the pleasure and the perfection of life in man comes from discovering and observing the right relation to the varied system which is without us and of which we are a part.

How palpably true this is, a moment's reflection will discover in even the commonest and most accepted activities of our existence. Did you ever think of what a loss it would be to man if there were only one color? Did you ever think how the world of sound would be curtailed if there were only one tone? Did you ever consider how impossible a world of sight if there were only one form? If there were no variety in form or color there would be no art; if there were no variety in tone or time there would be no music; if there were no variety in thought and conduct there would be no man.

As this is true for that material sphere which man inhabits called the earth, so is it true for that personal sphere in which he lives called the world. Society is an organism — part being related to part and all the parts bearing a relation to the whole. This parallelism is exhibited at length and in great detail in Herbert Spencer's "Principles of Sociology," Part II. The body physical and the body social present many points

of striking similarity. They are alike in composition — each is composed of individual units, the one of cells, the other of persons. They are alike in development; each organism, the physical and the social, grows in complexity as it grows in size. They are alike in equipment; each has organs formed on like principles and qualified to do like work. Each has appropriating, assimilating, distributing organs, and each is dependent on the power that is without them for their sustenance and life. Each has special parts exercising special functions, these parts and functions becoming more specialized as the body becomes more highly developed. In each organism, physical and social, every part is dependent on every other part. This, in brief, is the underlying idea of Mr. Spencer's analogy — and in this analogy he has only done with more detail, for the body social, what the Apostle Paul, centuries before, and in more general terms, did for the body spiritual. The general truth may be expressed in the words of the apostle, "The body is not one member but many." This is the teaching of philosophy; this is the evidence of experience and this is the implication of Christ, in this text we are considering.

Now this fact, which no man can dispute, creates an obligation. From the interdependence and interrelation of society follows a reciprocal in-

debtedness of each member to every other member. In other words, to bring the thought to the individual as a point of comparison, I am what I am because of others. How evident this is, even a hasty glance at the commonest things of our daily life will reveal.

A glance at my dinner table will at once reveal that I am largely indebted to others for the food that sustains me. The roast resting there has come from the plains of the West; the salt I put upon it has come from Virginia; the pepper is from the East Indies; the silver in my knife and fork is from the mines in Colorado, the linen of the tablecloth is from Ireland, the wood of my board, let me be boastful of my mahogany and say, is from Spanish Honduras, and the coffee which finishes my very simple meal is from the island of Java. Thus I am nourished by what the ends of the earth have provided for me.

Behold the "creature comforts" of my house, whence are they? The pictures from Paris or Germany; the rugs, let us hope, from Persia; the furniture, perchance from Grand Rapids, Mich., the bric-a-brac and curios from every nation of the earth. Thus am I comfortable, thus am I luxurious, because of the skill, industry and labor of a thousand men and women. Take the country in which I live, and whose liberties and

institutions have so largely made me what I am? Whence came it? Is it not the gift of the wisdom, the love, the labor and the sacrifice of those who have gone before me? It has been consecrated and hallowed by the blood and unselfish devotion, even unto death, of those whom I have never known, of those whom I can never repay.

But a man is not only what he has but what he knows. Whence my knowledge? To how many teachers, instructors, writers, counselors, friends am I indebted for the little that I know! Bring man down to the last analysis, let us say that the best that is within him is his character. Let us admit the truth that he is what his character is, and giving every credit to the self, how many thousands have helped to make me what I am in character! The best elements of character, the qualities of courage, love, kindness, sympathy, unselfishness, service, all presuppose and necessitate the existence of others than the self for their birth and development.

Now, as I am indebted to others for what I am, so others are my creditors as to what they ought to be and shall be. "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise,"¹ is the formula in which the Apostle has expressed this truth.

¹ Rom. i, 14.

As this is true with respect to the matters spiritual, so is it true with respect to the matters civil and social, and civil jurisprudence has expressed this obligation in the maxim, "Where there is a right there is a duty." That I have civil rights means that I have civil duties; that none must interfere with my life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, reads likewise that I must interfere with the life, liberty or pursuit of happiness of none. That I have a right to the fulfillment of that contract which you have given me, means likewise that you have a right to the fulfillment of that contract which I have given you.

This principle, which is so palpably true in the realm of the commercial and social, is likewise true in the realm of the moral. That I have moral rights means that I have moral obligations. Thus it is plain that interdependence interpreted rightly reads reciprocal indebtedness.

This obligation discloses a principle not so readily perceived; to wit, the greatest unselfishness is the highest self-interest. The idea tempting human nature is selfishness. We early learn to think of self. This is but natural; the first thoughts necessarily are of the self, and of the relation of that system which is without us to the self. Life in its earliest stages is ego-centric. The child begins by planning and seeking its com-

fort, its pleasure. The term "me" is soon learned and "my and mine" are not long in following. In this region the human life long lives, and it is only by training, thought and development that the human unit can be made to realize that "self" is not the center of the universe.

In this respect the moral world has paralleled the physical; for centuries man believed that he lived in a geo-centric system, and it was not until the Copernican teaching laid hold on the minds of men that they saw that man lives in a solar-centric system. The center of things is not within the self but without the self. This is the truth of science and this is the truth of religion.

The maxim commonly quoted is, "Every man for himself." Some have even yet remained bound to the old false notion. This false rule of life means not only no true love of the brother but no true love of the self — it means not only murder of the brother but murder of the self.

Now it is easily evidenced that the ill-being of others is the ill-being of self. A disease spot in a city is a menace to the entire community. A cancerous growth on any part of the social body injures the good health of that entire body. In London a few years ago the crusade against the sweat-shop system was initiated because the daughter of one of London's high officials was

brought to her death by a disease contracted through wearing a cloak made in the sweat-shops in which worked a girl who was afflicted with that disease. India is a great remove from Europe and America; one might think it makes but little difference to him personally whether India has the plague of cholera. But I have read that there has never been a great plague of cholera that did not originate in India. It behooves wise men on the principle of self-preservation, if for no other motive, to keep the health of the world sound. Likewise, the moral ill-being of others affects me. That there is dishonesty, robbery, murder and immorality in any part of the community means that my life is less secure, safe and comfortable for that very reason. The poverty, pauperism, discontent and wretchedness of a part of a people was a matter of little consequence to the nobles of France, to those who danced and gamed, to those who crowded the salons of Paris with their smiling and comfortable presence in 1789; but those who were once so indifferent became very interested, those who were once so unconcerned became very much identified with these things, when the wail of discontent changed into the cry of "to the guillotine!" and when the hidden roots of wretchedness bore the bloody, bitter fruit of 1793. Then the nobility, when the dread dis-

ease had reached the head, were made to realize that they were of the same body as were the suffering hands and feet of society. To-day in medicine we know that disease is not an affection of a part but an affection of the whole body, which merely reveals its symptoms in the part. How many times in history ancient and modern, has the apostle's wise dictum been verified, "If one of the members suffer all the members suffer with it"!

Likewise it is true that the well-being of others means the well-being of self. The health, wealth, knowledge, morality of the part expresses itself through the whole. "If Africa were filled with a civilized and prosperous people it would stimulate the business and multiply the gains of mankind." Thus has it come to pass again and again that the unselfishness of the Christian missionary has benefited and enriched the business enterprises of the selfish merchant who has refused to give, because he had no particular interest in the well-being of the barbarian. Thus may it be shown by patent, palpable proof that "if one member be honored all the members rejoice with it," and that in the last analysis the highest unselfishness is the highest self-interest.

If this principle be in any measure true, it commands a practice and demands a rule of ac-

tion. And here arises the difficulty, to find such a rule as shall be comprehensive, yet compact and complete, applying to all possible human relations. This was the problem the Master set himself to solve in the Golden Rule. Suppose that all possible human relations and conditions must be directed by separate laws and precepts, applying to particular individuals and to specific cases; how many volumes of laws must one have, how many statutes must be learned! Look at the number of volumes necessary to contain the statutes of a single State. Observe the precepts of Moses, and the multiplication of interpretations made by scribes and scholars, and one can get some vague idea of the colossal work. A man could not carry the volumes, much less become acquainted with their contents. Now Jesus has given us, in this Golden Rule, a principle which solves the problem and answers adequately every question of right conduct in the relation of a man to his brother. The rule is simple and portable, no man but what can easily remember it. A man carries within him the test of every possible situation. A few years ago the railroads of Pennsylvania asked one of its judges to frame in briefest possible form a notice that should comprehend the entire law of negligence. To-day we see the result of that effort on the sign-boards, placed

at the railroad crossing in that State; it reads, "Stop — look — listen." The judge received five thousand dollars for his skill. The Master has done a far harder thing in giving us the law of brotherly conduct in the few words of this Golden Rule.

This rule is not only portable and easily remembered but it is of easy and universal application. Can one conceive of any human situation to which it would not apply? It applies to every possible relation of human society — in the family, the school, the store, the state and the nation. Observe, again, that this rule is in the positive and not in the negative form; this makes it to include all desirable non-interference, as well as all positive helpfulness. I must not only not do anything to interfere with my brother's working out his own highest destiny, but it lays me under the obligation to do all that lies within my power to assist the development of the best life within my brother. It says to me that I am to put myself in my brother's place and so deal with him as I would have him deal with me. Suppose that "I" am the boy in the streets, asking for food, for education, for help and for healing — what would I desire my brother to do for me? From following this rule has come schools, hospitals, philanthropies and Christian civilization. The

practical application of this rule promises a glorious result, even the true religion — the fulfilling of the law and the prophets.

The observing and obeying of the law in this perfected form in which the Master gives it, makes religion to be that practical thing it was intended to be. All hours and all days are holy, all places and all callings are sacred, and religion is coterminous with life. This was the religion that Jesus ever taught, and the fulfillment or the failure to fulfill this law is the supreme test by which the sons of God are to be accepted or rejected. This is the sum of the law — this is the gathering up into one sentence of all those teachings that have gone before. This is the practical application of that sermon which the Master has been preaching. It is according to this law that the sons of men are to be judged, as is most clearly pictured for us in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. Before him shall be gathered all the nations of the earth, and they shall be tried by the Golden Rule.

To the one class he shall say, I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and in prison — and ye ministered unto me through ministering unto one of the least of these my brethren. To the other class he shall say, Because ye ministered not unto the least of these my brethren, when hungry,

thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and in prison, ye did it not unto me. In other words the measure of our treatment of our brethren is the measure of our treatment of Christ, and a man's service of God is manifested by his service to his fellows, and the true religion consists not in reciting creeds, nor in metaphysical theologies, not in making professions, nor performing rites, but in showing our love toward our God through our lives among our brothers.

And such a practical, real religion as this is coincident with the need and the desire of plain humanity at the present day. We can even see signs of the fulfillment of this promise in modern society. Should you ask what is the dominant idea of industrial relations to-day, we answer brotherhood. This is the underlying meaning of coöperation, association and organization among the working people; that is, among the best and sincerest of them. And in judging of the mass it is right to judge it from the most favorable instances. We do not deny that there are demagogues, time-servers and self-seekers among the brotherhoods of labor. They are but men. But even society itself, if judged from its least favorable aspects, might be condemned as "banded iniquity."

Should you ask what is the dominant idea among

the nations of the earth to-day, I answer you brotherhood — and call to witness the courts of arbitration and The Hague conferences. Should you ask what is the dominant idea of philanthropic activities, without hesitation I answer you brotherhood. Should you ask what is the dominant idea of Christian and church relations, I answer you brotherhood. The churches are coming closer together every year in their fraternal relations; it was but a short time ago since a Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian congregation in New York City united in a common communion service. The ultimate goal of humanity is the realization of this ideal. This was the prayer of Christ, "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."³ Therefore when we consider the scope, the practical operation and the heavenly end of this Golden Rule, are we not right in terming it the Greatest Law in the World?

³ Jno. xvii, 21.

CHAPTER XIX

LIFE'S GOLDEN INVITATION

Matt. vii, 13-14

THE great discourse is drawing to a close; Christ has finished the presentation of the outline of the Life Worth Living; he now approaches the point where he must make the practical application of his teaching.

The man who has been listening while the Master unfolds line upon line, precept upon precept, principle upon principle, has felt, "How hard is this teaching; how difficult this life; how narrow this way"; likewise that man who to-day reads, meditates upon and appreciates this discourse experiences a like state of mind and feeling.

With this estimate and impression the Master perfectly accords, and yet seeks in a brief and impressive manner to show that this life is narrow of necessity. He then makes an appeal to his hearers to choose the only way of life worth living, and offers them the Golden Invitation to enter that way, with the assurance that along this narrow way and only along this way, lies true life and worthy living.

We observe at the outset that this invitation which the Master gives is based on a general proposition, contained in the sentences, "Narrow is the gate and strait is the way which leads unto life," "For broad is the gate and wide is the way which leads to destruction." These striking utterances make it plain to us that all life is an adjustment, a harmony, a mean between two extremes, a knife-edge, a narrow way.

The ancient mariner, who would sail between the island of Sicily and the continent of Italy, must needs go through the narrow and perilous strait of Messina; on either hand lay death and destruction; on one side were the frightful rocks of Scylla, on the other the yawning whirlpool of Charybdis; only the courageous man, the skillful pilot and the brave mariner, could steer that narrow course necessary for a safe issue. Thus is life pictured to us in the words of our Teacher, the safe way, the right way, is a narrow, difficult course, while on either hand lies destruction.

The proposition which the Master here enunciates is true to the earth in its system. The earth is held in a delicate balance; its position and very existence depends upon the maintenance of this balance. There are two opposing forces which keep it in place; on the one hand there is the centripetal force, a gravitation toward the sun,

a pull, to speak popularly, which keeps it from flying off into space; but there is also a centrifugal force, due to the revolution of the earth in its orbit, which keeps it from flying into the sun, and so being destroyed. Destruction of the earth, in other words, lies on either hand; existence and life depend upon the exact balance.

As this is a principle true of the earth in its system, so is it true of the system in the earth. All things on this earth may be said to be in a state of equilibrium or balance. There is a place for everything and everything must be in its place; there is a right relation, an exact position, a particular function. This place, this position, this function, is the principle upon which the earth depends; destruction lies on either hand.

This is likewise true of all forms of life within the earth system. The physical life of man depends upon the maintenance of a perfect balance, an equilibrium. The forces without man tend to destroy this equilibrium, the forces within seek to retain, or if slightly shaken, to restore this balance. How delicate and how nicely adjusted is this balance is immediately revealed in the change of temperature, or in the heart action, or in other bodily symptoms, once the equilibrium has been disturbed. Let this equilibrium be disturbed, and the foes of health immediately assert

themselves. In other words, the way of physical life is narrow, while the way of physical destruction is very broad. How well is this familiar fact voiced in the quaint words of Sir Thomas Browne. "Men that look no further than their outsides think health an appurtenance unto life, and quarrel with their constitutions for being sick; but I, that have examined the parts of a man and know upon what tender filaments that fabric hangs, do wonder that we are not always so (sick); and, considering the thousand doors that lead to death, do thank my God that we can die but once."¹

The way of intellectual and mental life is a narrow way and the way of intellectual death is a broad way. How emphatically this is illustrated in the diseases of the brain and of the study of the delicate structure of that instrument of the mind, modern science and medicine makes only too plain.

But in this point our reference is more particularly to the intellectual side of the question. How few things we really know, and how imperfect is our knowledge of even those things we think we know; yet of how many things we are profoundly ignorant. Truth itself, or the sound and normal life of the intellect, is not poorly defined when

¹ "Religio Medici," Sir Thos. Browne.

we term it a balance, a harmony, a narrow way, depending for its very life upon the maintenance of a happy medium. There is only one road leading to intellectual life, while there are many roads leading to intellectual destruction. How plainly is this evidenced in the history of philosophy. Materialism in the extreme equals error; idealism in the extreme equals error. The truth lies somewhere between them. The intuitional philosophy in the extreme produces error; the utilitarian philosophy in the extreme is erroneous; the truth is the nice balance between them.

Likewise in the department of thought, termed Theology, the mistakes that have been made, it would appear have been the result of holding extreme views, the consequence of a departure from that middle way of life. This fact finds its illustration in the theology concerning the nature and person of Christ. To regard him as only divine results in Docetism and Sabellianism; to over-emphasize the human produced Aryanism and Nestorianism. Who is skillful enough to steer that narrow way between the two extremes? He is the happy man, who can safely and equally hold the Christ to be the God-man.

This same principle has its abundant illustration in men's methods of interpreting the Scriptures. Extreme literalism in interpretation lands

us in absurdities and contradictions; while extreme spiritualizing and allegorizing lands one in that which is meaningless and nonsensical, and makes us as absurd as Origen. The truth lies somewhere between. In short, man's entire nature is made upon this plan; the maintenance of a balance, the keeping of a narrow way.

The failure to keep the right balance, the right relation of powers and faculties within a man, to each other, results in a one-sided, disproportioned and abnormal product. Here, for instance, is a man who allows his brain, his intellect, his head, to run away with him. The artist represents such an one, and rightly, with a very large head, and a small, undeveloped body. The humorist denominates such an one as "megalocephalous" or "swelled-head," and he speaks the truth. These pictures and these phrases stand for a fact; he is puffed up, swollen, self-conceited, self-contained and inevitably in error. He is a thinking machine, cold, logical, an icicle; at home in a library, a lecture-hall or a study, but out of place and a bore elsewhere. He is not even safe as a teacher, because he only knows life on its one side; he is biased, over-balanced; nor can he be trusted to impart the truth, for he is not rightly adjusted to the world in which he lives.

Though he may be right in certain aspects of

life, for the intellect has its place, yet he is just as wrong in others, for heart and will have their place in the world of men.

Here, on the other hand, is a man who runs all to heart, emotions, affections, feelings. The artist represents him with his heart on his sleeve; he is pictured with long flowing locks, a drooping eye, a weak mouth and a sad, sweet smile; the boys call him softy and sop. He is apt to be found among artists, musicians and kindred callings where the sensibilities and feelings predominate. His intellect is rightly represented by a very small numeral. His will is a neural cord instead of a backbone. His home is at a "pink" tea, a chrysanthemum supper or a "german." He is not a fit associate for man or woman.

Here is still another, whose will far overweighs his other faculties. He is stubborn, heady, quarrelsome, opinionated, overbearing and to be avoided. He is not of a strong will, for this depends upon the right relation of the will to the other faculties, but he is "will-ful."

From such an one comes disputation, refutation, egotism and war. Thus we see that the psychical life of man depends upon a very nice adjustment, a balance, a right relation and proportion of faculty to faculty. It is, in other words, a narrow way.

Moreover, the life of a right morality is a narrow way, the life of a right and wise conduct, for be the man within ever so nicely adjusted yet he must be in proper adjustment to the world of men and of things and forces that are without. He must be as nicely balanced in his conduct as is the bird in that tenuous air, through which it wings its way. This delicacy of adjustment may be represented by the paradoxical principles that right living must observe. "In decision a double demand is constantly laid upon us: make deliberation habitual, yet decide promptly when the evidence is once in."² The man who decides without deliberation is lost; the man who deliberates without ever reaching a decision is likewise lost. We have seen men who failed on either hand; the way to destruction is broad.

"In the moral life quietism wars with enthusiasm, the mood of the East with the mood of the West, and yet we can spare neither." Destruction lies in either extreme. "Character in the large sense requires both self-assertion and self-surrender, both individuality and deference, both the assertion of the law for one's self, and the reasonable yielding to others, both loyalty to conviction and open-mindedness, both free independ-

² This and following references are to H. C. King's "Rational Living."

ence and obedience." One may miss the true way on either side; one has missed the true way, the way of life, when he has failed to keep the balance. "Religion, too, has to steer between superstitiousness that sees the magically supernatural everywhere, and a materialistic realism that sees God nowhere." On the one side of this narrow strait lie the rocks of materialism, on the other hand is the whirlpool of a bottomless spiritualism. Thus do we see that in every phase of man's existence the way of life is a narrow way, and calls for the utmost endeavor to keep it. "Few there be that find it."

Now this proposition that life is a narrow way having been in a measure evidenced — and it might be far more largely substantiated did space permit — we observe that the Master here makes a particular application of the principle, to this discourse. He is now summing up and drawing to a conclusion, and he here characterizes the way of which he has been speaking as a narrow way.

Life has been his theme through the entire discourse; the ideal life, the life worth living, the life which God demands of His children. Moreover, life here in this present world has been the theme of his teaching. He says nothing and he intimates nothing about the hereafter. It is true he is speaking of the citizens and of the laws of the

kingdom of heaven, but that kingdom of heaven of which he speaks is here and now, in their very midst, or even within them as he teaches at a later day. We must bear this in mind, as we think on these things, for some having forgotten to keep the true relation of predicate to subject have gone greatly astray in their interpretation of the sermon, at this point.

That this way, of which he has been speaking, is a narrow way, is shown by the general proposition which we have already stated; that it is a narrow way is shown more amply and quite as clearly from a consideration of the paradoxes of Scripture, wherein our right relation to the world in which we live is intimated. These paradoxes express the harmony, the balance, the mean between the extremes. "Blessed are they that mourn." "Rejoice and again I say rejoice." That is, in this world a man is to be sad and yet glad; "Blessed are the meek." "Let no man despise thy youth." That is, a man is to be humble, and yet of a strong self-esteem. "Bear ye one another's burdens." "Every man shall bear his own burden." A man is to be self-reliant and yet fully aware of his dependence on others and of others' dependence on him. "Work out your own salvation." "By grace ye are saved." That is, a man has much to do for himself, while

he remembers that God does much more for him. "Render unto Cæsar — Render unto God." A man is under an obligation to the kingdoms of this world, and at the same time under an obligation to the kingdom not of this world. "Use the world — but — do not abuse the world." That is, there is a right use for everything and there is a wrong use for everything. The due proportion must be maintained. These paradoxes might be indefinitely multiplied, but those given are sufficient amplification and illustration of the principle involved — bringing again before our minds how narrow is the way of life — and how broad is the way of destruction.

But if you would be finally convinced that the way the Master teaches is a narrow way, run over those subjects once more concerning which he has spoken. Begin with that nicely balanced harmonious character he has set before them. Hear him as he says that we are to live the peaceable life, live the pure life, live the large life, live the perfect life, live free from avarice, live free from double-mindedness, live free from worry, live free from censoriousness. When we realize what this life includes and what it excludes, we become aware that a path is here laid down that calls for exceeding exactness of walk and for most delicately adjusted powers of conduct.

And now our Teacher, from speaking of the way, turns to speak of the common temptation which arises when we contemplate this way. This is taught us in those words, "Many there be that enter in thereby," and, "Few there be that find it." Do not these words teach that which is a fact of our observation and experience? Take life on the physical side. How many are living that narrow way which may be really called life? Ask the doctors how many are living rationally, hygienically? Ask them how many are over-eating, how many under-eating? How many over-working, how many under-working? Is it not true here that very few enter at the straight gate, and walk the narrow way? Turn from this to the moral and intellectual life. How many here maintain their balance, keep the road of truth? Are men using their brains as they ought? Is not the complaint against the people to-day, as it was in Isaiah's time, "My people do not think"? Are most people even attempting to become familiar with the great thoughts of the great thinkers of all time? If you think so, behold "the people" as they go to business to-morrow by tram and by train, and what are they reading; the best books of all ages? They are reading a one cent newspaper. But see them at night, at leisure in their homes! What now are they reading?

That same one cent newspaper. But comes the Sabbath, the day of rest, and of spiritual refreshment. Now behold them! They will now be reading their best literature. What is it? That same newspaper, but to-day increased in size and clothed in calico gaudiness in recognition of the Sabbath.

And when it comes to the narrow way of character and conduct, the best we can say is what the old Quaker said to his wife, "Wife, it seems to me that every one but me and thee are unbalanced, and sometimes methinks that thee art a little queer." In short, how few there be that find the narrow way, which combines strictness with liberality, gentleness with firmness, generosity with thrift, industry with moderation, temperance with tolerance.

The Master, then, in these phrases states what is a fact, but it is well for us to mention a modification of the fact. These phrases "few" and "many" must not be extended too far nor beyond the subjects which they modify.

The Master is certainly not here forestalling the Day of Judgment, nor is he affording us a norm by which we are to tell the final destiny of ourselves nor our fellows. The terms "life" and "destruction" are both of the relative. Take them in their broad sense and do they not ac-

cord with the common facts of our common experience? Do they not tell us that many are marred, hampered and hindered by the want of balance in some phase of their lives, and that few are symmetrical and harmonious in their lives, and that all stand in need of these finger-posts of principle which he is here erecting, to guide all into the narrow way of life? And do they tell us anything more? I believe not. These phrases, above referred to, also intimate a reason for the fact. It is so easy to go wrong and it is so hard to go right. Human nature feels the temptation to move along the line of the least resistance. It is easy to drift with the current, it is hard to row against it. The Master here says the easy is the wrong way, the perilous way. Another reason for the fact is, this is the way the crowd goes, and because a man moves along the line of the least resistance, a man goes with the crowd. Is this not true? That the easy way, the broad way is the way of the crowd? How many followed and became patrons of this narrow way of Christ during his life on earth? We cannot give figures but we can certainly say, not many.

How many are there to-day allied with our churches compared with those not identified with our churches? How many even within our

churches are going this narrow way? How many are practicing, or attempting to practice, the religion of Christ as here exhibited? Not the way, mark you, approved by the fathers, the counsels and the courts of the church; but the way revealed, approved and here outlined by the Master. So the statement of the Master is sadly true, "Many there be that enter in thereby" and "Few there be that find it."

Because of the principle, because of the fact, because of the temptation, the Master utters the urgent invitation, "Enter ye in by the narrow gate." This invitation has all along been implied but now it is formally stated; stated to those disciples who heard those words so long ago, offered through them to those disciples to whom this plan of the life worth living might through all time come. There is an urgency in this invitation, a pathetic urgency, resting in the God-given ability of the man to choose. Christ is not mocking his people, he is not asking us to do the impossible. You *can* choose, you *must* choose! Not to choose the narrow way is to choose the broad way. There are in reality only two ways, however so many more there may seem to be. This invitation is urgent because of the blessed end of it. This way alone leads to real life, all others lead away from true and right

living.

Thus doth the Master here appeal to the complete gamut of the motives of his hearers. He appeals to the noble in man, to the motives of aspiration, hope, courage and a true ambition. He appeals to the base motives, of apprehension, fear and self-preservation. One question forces itself upon our minds. Why is so good an invitation given in so forbidding a form? The answer is forthcoming; because of the honesty of the Master. He must state the facts and these are the facts. How differently framed are the invitations of men. The very morning I was writing the above lines there came into my hand an invitation to invest in some mining stock, with the glowing promise that the stock was sure to give a return of from six hundred to a thousand per cent. on the investment. I fear this offer because it promises too much. Jesus would have us know the worst at the beginning. "If it were not so I would have told you."

Fairness causes him to couch his invitation in this form. He endorses the opinions of men that this way is not easy. It *is* hard to live truly. He would make us alive to this fact and aware of the real difficulties of right living. We can also sense in this invitation the prudence of a man who knew men. The very difficulties of

the problem before us, of the question to be decided, at once make us to realize our need of the divine help, and so it leads logically up to the thought of the last section of this grand discourse, wherein the divine Helper, even the Son of Man and the Son of God, is set before us, as the one who has come into this world to help us to find and to keep the narrow way of the perfect life.

CHAPTER XX

LIFE'S NEEDED WORD OF WARNING AND WISDOM

Matt. vii, 15-20

JESUS is fully aware that his last utterances, concerning life as a narrow way and to be entered by a gate that is straight, is a teaching that is unpalatable and hard for his hearers to receive.

He who knew men knew that this counsel which he had just given ran counter to human desire and impulse; he knew that it interfered with the easy peace of mind which the flesh loves so well; he understood that it contradicted the *laissez faire* doctrine of life, so acceptable to the thoughtless and the indifferent; he knew that it conflicted with the common practices of men.

And knowing these things, he further knew that in his day and in the days to come, as in the former days, in the times of Jeremiah and Isaiah, there would be those who would have "itching ears," those who would weary of this hard counsel, those who would say to their religious leaders and teachers, to their prophets, "Prophecy not unto us right things: speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits."

He who knew men knew that there would be those among the so-called prophets who would respond to this demand. Those who would no longer speak that truth hard to tell, unwelcome to hear, but those who would respond to this desire of the people, who would answer to this call, and who would teach of an easy life, and a smooth path into the kingdom of heaven.

The Master would save his children, the Teacher would save his disciples, from the folly and fatality of following such leaders. Therefore, in his present lesson he warns them of the false prophets that shall arise; he places within their keeping a test by which they may know the false prophet, and by which the sincere, honest, earnest seeker after truth and life may likewise know the true prophet. But, further, by furnishing them with this test he has put within their means the measure by which they may know him; the philosopher's stone, which while it makes known the base metal shall also show him to be the safe and true prophet to follow.

In this passage our Lord plainly, clearly recognizes what is a fact, namely, that the prophet has a place and part in society. That there is a need for the office of the prophet is most clearly shown by the prevalence of the prophet. At no time in the history of the world of which we may know

anything was there ever a period when the prophet is not present. He is found among the Chinese and the Indians of the East, among the Babylonians and the Assyrians, among the Egyptians and the Greeks and the Romans, among the most civilized and enlightened nations of antiquity. He is likewise found among those peoples that give the least evidence of advancement and culture. Among the Patagonians and the American Indians, the Sandwich Islanders and the most primitive peoples, the office of prophet is present and is honored. And always where he is present he has had a following. The reason for this is not far to seek. Men are by nature differently gifted and variously talented. Some have the gift of healing, some of organizing, some are by nature leaders of their fellows; some have skill of hand, some greater power of observation or invention, and some are gifted as the seer. The prophet is not merely, nor even principally, the man who foresees and predicts events which are to come to pass; but he is the man who lives near to the heart of facts; the man who inhabits the upper air and catches broad visions of principles, the man who is in tune with the Infinite; in short, the prophet is the mouthpiece of the Almighty, the man who speaks for God and concerning the things divine.

To-day, as much as in the former years, there is among the people the desire and the demand for the one who will speak and teach concerning the things of God. There is the yearning for a leader; the man who will speak with authority. Society is interrelated and interdependent and so arises the need for authorities who can teach us wisdom, in the various affairs of life. Hence the office of the prophet ever has and ever will have a place among mankind. In these words then, the Master not only recognizes the rightful place of the prophet, but he tells us what is a sad and depressing fact, namely, that even those who speak for God, and about the things divine, those who teach in the name of the Lord, do not all of them speak truly, neither can they all be implicitly trusted, nor safely followed. He here refers to a class whom he elsewhere denominates as "blind leaders of the blind."

There are, and there ever will be in the world, false-prophets; some through ignorance, those who think they have a call from God to speak, but whose teaching is foolishness; some through false motives, it may be prompted by the desire to support a cause or an institution, they affirm as the truth of God what is only the invention of man; some through lack of independence or through desire to comply with the popular clamor

or to contract the popular applause; some through bad motives, for the gain of power, or the accumulation of gold, or the credit of piety; yes, there are even those who will play the hypocrite to be counted "holy" of their fellows. But there are also true prophets, and it is that his followers may be able to tell the true as well as to discern the false that the Master here offers the true test of a prophet.

In speaking of the proof of a prophet, our Lord says that we cannot always tell the true prophet from the false, by the appearance. He may be clad in the characteristic sheep's coat of the prophets of old, he may be garbed in the long-tailed coat and the white tie of the modern day, he may have the most fashionable and most approved dress of any period, but this does not mark him as a true prophet. Nor can we tell the false prophet by his facial appearance; he may have the face of a saint, the "alabaster brow and the sad sweet smile" which accredits a prophet with so many to-day. He may use the honeyed words and the "cant" phrases which the pietistic approve and the unthinking accept as a mark of his prophetic gift. Jeremiah complains of the false prophets of his day, because they decorated and interlarded their pious, false utterances with the cant phrase then in vogue, "The burden of

the Lord." He may make a claim to extreme holiness; the false prophet usually does, and his possession of that gift is usually in inverse ratio to his boast of it. The man who has really attained this state, if any man ever attains it, is never aware of it. How many and how easily are persons carried away, and deceived by these very appearances which the Lord here tells us are no marks of a true prophet!

Then he names the test of the prophet, the supreme, the perfect, test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." It takes time to apply this test, but it is the only safe and reliable proof of a prophet. How much the Master thinks of it, is shown by his elaboration of it. He is almost tautological in his expressions concerning this test. He tells his hearers in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses that this law is a law of nature — true for trees and true for men — true for everything which has life. The outer manifestation must correspond to the inner life; if the life is good, the fruit must be good; if the life is bad, the fruit cannot be other than bad.

This law is unalterable and cannot be changed. There is no appeal from this test, it is final; it is the Lord's own test of priest and people. Here he applies it to the prophets, to the leaders of the people in things spiritual; in the following pas-

sage he applies it to the people themselves. Observe, it is final and unequivocal; there is not one law for the preacher and one for the people; they are all to be judged by the same law, both preacher and people.

But, asks some one, "Who is to apply this test?" The answer is, the individual; each for himself. Is it not written and "Ye shall know them"? Reason and judgment and the God-given faculties of man are to be used by the man himself.

"To know" is an intellectual process and an intellectual end which each must exercise and attain for himself. This is not a function which may be delegated to counsel, or to authority, or to church or to any other man or body of men; it is a responsibility that attaches to the individual and that each must exercise for himself. It is true that there may be helps and guides in applying this test, as the opinions, endorsements, approvals, estimates, experiences of others, but ultimately the authority to decide rests and must ever rest with the man himself. The right of private judgment obtains in the sphere of religion, and the obligation of tolerance and charity is a corollary of this principle. One may fairly ask, What is the practical result of this searching test? And the answer must be given that it is

twofold, working not only the condemnation of some, but the approval of many more of the prophets.

Right here it seems to me that the power conferred by the gift of the test has been abused or misapplied. The customary use of this test has been for the condemnation and rejection of all those prophets and their followers who may not agree with me in doctrine and belief. View the commentators on this passage and see if it is not so. Pharisees and Sadducees, Pelagians and Socinians, Armenians and Presbyterians, Confucians and Mohammedans, *seriatim*, according to the creed of the person using the test, have been found fruitless and condemned. This surely is a misuse of the test, for two reasons. It was not given for our pride and puffing up, but for our enlightenment and to lead to the true prophet. This test, "By their fruits ye shall know them," approves many of the prophets whom many are prone to condemn. Take the great prophets of history: Gautama, Zoroaster, Confucius and Mohammed. Are they to be classed with the false prophets? Surely they have borne fruit, good fruit, abiding fruit, fruit which has fed and nourished millions of men for centuries, and fruit that must be acceptable to the Master. Fruits of pure, charitable, unselfish, self-sacrificing, God-seeking

and God-serving lives.

Above all, this test leads us into the presence and unto the feet of the Prince of the Prophets. Again let us ask, Why were we given this warning and why this test? Surely it was not for the futile task of finding false prophets alone. This would be a vain labor. But for the practical and necessary end of finding the true Prophet of our lives. Not for the hopeless and useless object of destructive criticism, as so many interpreters seem to think, but for the vital and useful end of discovering the real leader of our lives. It is not necessary for a man to know all the ways of evil before he can know the way of good.

It is not necessary for a man to count every other way as utterly worthless because he knows the best way. It is not necessary to mark all the false prophets who have lived and taught if we can find the true prophet. Therefore the best use that can be made of this searching test is to apply it to that one who above all others claims to be the Prophet of Truth. In other words, there is one prophet whose fruits approve and accredit him — the true Prophet is Christ. He has here given us the scales in which he invites his disciples to weigh him; he has here given us the norm by which he asks us to judge him; he

has here given us the test by which he asks us to prove him.

If, then, one ask me, and it must ever be a personal question, a subject of personal testimony, a matter which each must ultimately settle for himself; if one ask me why I believe Jesus Christ to be the Prince of the Prophets, I answer: I believe him to be such, to-day, not because my father has so told me, not because the church has approved him, not because councils have endorsed him, not because theology has logically established him — though all these authorities have their weight and their weight is great, but because he, above all others, satisfies that test which himself has established, and because my mind, my heart and my spirit know him to be the prophet preëminent and the Lord of my life.

By the fruit in his own life I know him to be the true prophet. He affords me the truest idea of man that I have ever known. He is the best expression of personality that I have found in this world. This surely was the thought of Paul, when he said, "Till we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. iv, 13).

Of manhood, a man himself is capable of judging; he has within himself the power of knowing manhood; he has the faculties for tasting and

testing manhood, and who beholds and thinks upon the Christ, sees the perfect man. Now this manhood expresses itself in his words and teachings. In these words I find a counsel above that of man, a guide which my soul approves. In his words I find a warning which my inner sense says is true. In his words I find a comfort, such as I can find nowhere else, a comfort which reaches my deepest sorrow, strengthens my greatest weakness, kindles my faintest hopes, lightens my darkest paths.

The practical test of light is its illuminating power; Christ's words are light. The practical test of food is its nourishing power; Christ's words satisfy my soul hunger. The practical test of water is its refreshing power; Christ's words are to me a mountain spring. Therefore he is my Prophet.

This manhood expresses itself in the works he did while he was on the earth. I look at the record of the life he lived here and I find that life was in him, because life issued from him. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." This is his own test and proof of himself, we might almost say to himself. At the opening of his ministry he read these words before the people of his home town of Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he anointed me

to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Who does these things, whoever he may be, is the heaven-accredited guide, and must be the guide of my life. And because he did them more and more excellently than any other, he above all is my Prophet.

But this life expressed itself best in his character. There is no attribute of a good character which is not found in him in its perfection. He had the stronger qualities of a great character, courage, honesty, fearlessness, independence, self-reliance and he had also the gentler qualities of true greatness of kindness, meekness, sympathy, patience, tolerance, forgiveness. And these qualities were combined in a service that never faltered, and in a sacrifice that stopped not even at the cross.

Moreover, he is unique in this that his character is stainless and his life without sin. "In vain we look through the entire biography of Jesus for a single stain or the slightest shadow on his moral character. There never lived a more harmless being on earth. He injured nobody, he took advantage of nobody. He never spoke an improper word, he never committed a

wrong action. He exhibited a uniform elevation above the objects, opinions, pleasures and passions of this world and disregard to riches, displays, fame and favor of men. . . . No vice that has a name can be thought of in connection with Jesus Christ. Ingenious malignity looks in vain for the faintest trace of self-seeking in his motives; sensuality shrinks abashed from his celestial purity; falsehood can leave no stain on him who is incarnate truth; injustice is forgotten beside his errorless equity; the very possibility of avarice is swallowed up in his benignity and love; the very idea of ambition is lost in his divine wisdom and divine self-abnegation.”¹

But, still more, that harmony and balance of character, that perfect adjustment and due proportion, which he himself has named as the true way of life, finds its best and truest exemplification in him. “Christ was free from all one-sidedness which constitutes the weakness as well as the strength of most eminent men.”² “His character never lost its even balance and happy equilibrium, never needed modification or readjustment.” “He combined the vivacity without the levity of the sanguine, the vigor without the

¹ “The Person of Christ,” by Philip Schaff, D.D., Am. Tract Society, 1865, pp. 53-4.

² This and the following quotations from Schaff’s “Person of Christ,” noted above.

violence of the choleric, the seriousness without the austerity of the melancholic, the calmness without the apathy of the phlegmatic temperament." He was preëminently sane and natural. "Elevated above the affairs of the world, yet he mingled with society — played with little children, shed tears at the sepulcher, delighted in God's nature." "His zeal never degenerated into passion, nor his constancy into obstinacy, nor his benevolence into weakness, nor his tenderness into sentimentality." "He was the most effective and yet the least noisy, the most radical and yet the most conservative, calm and patient, of all reformers."

Such a balanced, harmonious, symmetrical, perfect character must awake my approval and elicit my admiration, and this from the very fact of beholding it, as one who sees the rose must acknowledge it to be beautiful; who looks upon the sun must confess it to be light.

Jesus affords me the truest idea of God that I have ever known. Rightly does the apostle John say, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son . . . he hath declared him" (or made him manifest).

No man hath seen God in theologies. These may deal in representations of the Almighty, but they so analyze, define and exalt Him, as to re-

move Him out of my reach. No man hath seen God in metaphysic and philosophy; to speak of Him as the Infinite, the Absolute and the Eternal, is to enwrap Him in such clouds of heavenly glory that he is hidden from the feeble gaze of earth-born men.

But Christ represents to me a God whom I can understand, a God who has come down to the level of man; a God who dwells among His people; a God who helps His people, not only in the great ongoings, but in their daily lives; a God who loves with a love that passeth knowledge; a God whom I can love, must love; a God who saves, and who is so anxious that His children should be in all things what He would have them, that Himself suffers for their sins, becomes poor that they may be rich, dies that they may live.

In a word Christ represents God to be that which we all know and can sufficiently understand — a Father. This is preëminently Christ's contribution to our knowledge of God. He has brought back to the human family that knowledge which it had lost — the knowledge of our Father in Heaven. And therefore he is my Prophet of God.

He affords the truest ideals of life. Others have spoken wisely but he the best of all. Others have given precepts but he has given princi-

ples. Con over those principles which he has given in this discourse as the lines along which the life of man should be lived, and does not the heart and mind see them to be the true, the perfect way of life? Here is life's philosophy; here is life's practical hand-book; where will you find one to surpass it? Where will you find one to compare with it? I know no other who so knew the heart of man; who so comprehended the requirements of life; who has spoken so aptly for every stage and state of our life. Therefore he is the Prophet of Life.

But more than this, he is the Prince of the Prophets because of the fruits that have been borne by those who have hid their lives in him. He has endured the test of time. That test which causes the mountains to crumble, the nations to change, the kingdoms to vanish away, the teachings of to-day to become the vagaries of to-morrow; that test which has stamped as false so much that has been counted true; which has marked as evanescent so much that has been counted permanent; that test which the wise Gamaliel set for the disproving or proving of the Christ; that test Christ and his teachings have endured. The years have gone, the centuries have sped by, the Christ and his religion have been tried by criticism, by persecution, by opposition, by ap-

proval, by experience, by life, and to-day is it not true that he is the grandest figure that has crossed the stage of history? Is not this the testimony of mankind? Who to-day can be compared with the Christ? Who can be even placed in the same class with him? Philosophers, scientists, historians, *littérateurs*, philanthropists, generals, statesmen, all come to lay the laurels of their tribute, if not their worship, at his feet. Sages, philosophers and prophets, while they may teach something of the spirit of his teaching, when they come into his presence it is not to instruct but to be instructed; when they pass before him it is not to receive homage but to pay it. To-day his name is above every name that is named on earth.

Moreover, to-day more than at any time in the history of the world, he is the most vital element, the most beneficent power that is in the society of men. From him have issued those healing streams that have cleansed the foul spots of earth. From him has radiated the light that has caused to grow the flowers and fruits of the beautiful, the blessed life; philanthropies, institutions, charities have sprung up in the wake of his blessed footsteps. His is the Love that has touched the heart of the beast and made him into a man; touched the heart of the savage and made him into a citizen; touched the heart of a man and

made him into a god.

Enter to-day into the homes where peace reigns, and the blessed life is found; ask who hath done this — will not the answer be the Christ?

Enter the hospitals where the sick and afflicted lie on their beds of pain, and inquire who hath ministered to your distresses, and who hath healed your wounds — and will not the answer be the Christ? Go into the institutions for the blind and the deaf. Inquire who hath founded these — and will not the answer be the Christ? Go among the settlement workers in our cities, and ask them what hath led them there and what hath kept them there — and will not the answer be the Christ? Cross the seas, penetrate the forests of Africa, walk the streets of the cities of Asia, pierce to the snow-clad plains and mountains of Alaska, inquire of the missionaries there, for there is no spot of earth too barren, no habitation too forbidding for them to dwell in, what hath brought and kept them there — and will not the answer be the Christ? As the greatest power in the world to-day is personality, so the greatest personality in the world is the Christ.

While I contemplate this human exponent of the divine, the prophet of Nazareth, I see the heavens opened, I hear the voice of God Himself,

saying, as He said so many, many years ago, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." And I must reply, "O Christ! Thou art, and ever shalt be my Prophet, Priest and King."

CHAPTER XXI

LIFE'S RELATION TO THE CHRIST AND HIS RELIGION

Matt. vii, 21-29

THE discourse of the Teacher now draws to its close; he has made known to his disciples the constitution of the kingdom of God; he has revealed to them the life worth living, he has accredited and established himself as the Prince of the Prophets; it now remains to press home the importance of the Teacher and his teachings upon the disciples. This which we have been considering and are now concluding is the Gospel of the Savior, this is the way of life our Master taught, this is the creed of the Christ, this is the religion of our Lord.

The remainder of the Gospel record, that brief and beautiful story of miracle, parable and occasional saying, can almost all if not quite all of them be fitted into some one of the great life themes, here systematically expounded. His entire life is elaborative and illustrative of this discourse. These are the texts upon which his life is the sermon.

As we come to the study of the application of this sermon by the Teacher himself, let us take his own words for text; let us emerge from the clouds of controversy, let us free ourselves from the bondage of fixed opinion, let us approach this passage for the first time, let us for once ask, not what men have said about these words of our Lord, but what the words themselves say to us. Let us eliminate the centuries with their multitudes of minds and their myriads of interpretations, colored now by this, now by that, motive, passion, controversy; let us for the moment sit with his disciples, on the side of the Mount, hearing this teaching of the Savior as the disciples heard it; let us look upon it in its early morning freshness, before the passing of man has shaken off the dew; then let us inquire, What does he here say to me? What does he here mean for me?

One thing at this point clearly impresses itself upon our thought. The Master has come very close to his disciples, he has won their strictest attention, they are fully aware that he is now speaking of the importance of their right relation to him and to his teachings. This importance has been implied in every theme of which he has treated; this importance to them underlay the promise and warning, gave force to the command

and admonition which he has uttered in their hearing. They could not but be aware that it was not a matter of indifference or even of idle preference, but a matter of transcendent importance to their lives — these things of which he has been speaking. Has he not spoken to them of the way of life, the path of blessedness, the entrance into the kingdom of heaven — has he not all along implied that it was a matter of the supremest moment to their well-being that they should hear, and heed and lay to heart this heavenly teaching? Yea, they have sensed it from the beginning of his words, they have felt it increasingly as he advanced in his unfolding of the kingdom of heaven, but now they know the importance of these things that he has been saying to them, as they have not known them before.

Christ in this part of his discourse assumes a new attitude toward his hearers. We can imagine a new light in his eye, a new tone in his voice, a new intensity in his manner, and a new earnestness of spirit. He is now speaking to them from a new standpoint, even that of authority — his own authority. We can find evidence of this fact in the passage which now engages our thought. Thrice he uses the expression “me,” thrice the phrase “in my name,” twice the word “mine.” It is apparent also in that new position which

he assumes and to which he darkly yet distinctly alludes in the phrase "in that day." He has already given a far-off hint of "that day"; when he was speaking of the progressive element of that Gospel he taught, then he said, "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Now he makes a kindred but more distinct allusion to "that day"; this is clearly, from the pictured relation of mankind to him, the day of his rule, dominion, power, authority; that day when his words are the norm of a right life, and his teaching the measure of a man. And as he speaks to his hearers on the mountain side, he becomes transfigured in spirit; he sees that distant day as though it were present; he views that far-off consummation in the ever-present "now" of God's accomplishment; and this which he sees and feels, for the instant his hearers sense and know in his new spirit and authority toward them. How unmistakably is this revealed in the closing words of the report of this sermon, probably made by one who was present at that time, and who knew whereof he spoke, "The people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority in himself, and not as the scribes." Yes, the importance of these teachings and of this Teacher

to mankind could not be overestimated. Their right relation to him means life. So it arises that the Master here tells his hearers what constitutes a right relation to him, and how it is established, in other words, in these closing lessons he is speaking to his disciples on WHAT CONSTITUTES A TRUE PROFESSION OF FAITH IN HIM.

“Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” A formal profession of him is not enough. In these words, “Not every one,” etc., if language has any meaning, the unqualified value of oral and formal profession of Christ is explicitly denied. There is ever and everywhere a tendency to materialize religion, to tie spiritual things to material forms; to make some rite, some ceremonial observance, some formula of words, the way of salvation, and against this temptation to carnalize and materialize religion, throughout this great discourse, Jesus firmly sets his face, but nowhere more clearly, more strongly, more explicitly than in these closing words. This temptation is seen in the heathen religions — indeed, it is the essential evil of heathenism and the atheistic absurdity of idolatry; this tendency has its ample evidencing in the Jewish religion, where temple service and temple forms and priestly rule are made to take the place of righteousness. It is

against this heathenism in the Jewish religion that prophets prophesied and preachers preached. But alas! that this same temptation should have been yielded to in that most spiritual religion which the Christ founded, and yet such are the facts. Note, that after the death and departure of Jesus this same old tendency asserted itself, and men sought to make religion to consist of forms, ceremonies and the traditions of men. Even as the Children of Israel relapsed into the idolatries of Egypt when their leader Moses had been absent from them but a few days, so when Christ had entered into the heavens, it was not long before instinctive materialism began to assert itself. Men attempted to make the formalism of dogma take the place of the free spirit of the living Gospel. They taught that only those who assented to a belief in the Trinity, or in the immaculate conception, or the foreordination of God, etc., etc., etc., could be saved. Then only those who assented to a set form of words, formulated by the church, could have hopes of salvation. Note the Athanasian creed, "This is God and man, God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world. Perfect God and perfect man. Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father

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as touching his manhood, who although he be God and man, yet he is not two but one Christ. One not by the conversion of the Godhead into man, but by the taking of the manhood into God . . . this is the Catholic faith which except a man believe he cannot be saved." However excellent this may be as an attempt to define the undefinable, and to comprehend the incomprehensible, it is certainly absurd and contradictory to make it a test of a Christian life. How many thousands have assented to this creed to whose minds and lives it had no intelligible meaning! Thus is salvation made to consist in the apprehension of a metaphysical proposition or in the assent to a purely philosophical tenet.

Many a man has been cast out of the church and condemned to eternal damnation because all he knew and could assent to was, "I know I was blind and now I see." And even to-day we have those who pin a man's salvation to the fact of whether he has in the presence of the congregation said, "Lord — Lord!"

But, says our Teacher, this is not a distinguishing mark of the religion of Christ. Not professing, nor confessing, nor praising, nor pretending "with the mouth" will win a man into the kingdom of heaven, or will make a man a follower of Christ.

Yet again we see that the qualified value of oral and formal profession is not denied, but the oral confession of Christ must be put on a new and a true basis. In other words, let us put it as plainly as did our Lord — oral profession of him is not a *sine qua non* to salvation. "He that doeth the will of my Father" shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, is our Lord's teaching. He that "doeth these words of mine" builds a house that shall abide. How more clearly could this truth be taught than it is in the parable of "Go work in my vineyard," recorded in Matthew the twenty-first chapter and the twenty-eighth through the thirty-second verses? "Go work in my vineyard" is the command given to the two men; "I go, sir," is the commendable and clear assent of the first; "I will not," is the equally distinct dissent of the second. But later the conduct of each contradicted the confession of each. "Which of these did the will of the Father?" Jesus makes the application of the parable himself, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," for ye confess and do not the will, while they confess not yet do. Which of these is that profession of Him he will approve? Verily he teaches his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot pass this teaching without adverting to that pas-

sage in Matthew's record, which those who would compel men to say, "Lord — Lord," conjure by. It runs, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." As commonly interpreted this is made to mean just that which the Lord himself here expressly denies, a verbal, oral confession of his name, in public. Observe the inconsistency of the interpreters; "confess" is made to mean openly, orally and publicly "with the mouth" to acknowledge the name of Jesus; but "deny" is not taken in this sense but is made to mean, to refuse to acknowledge in heart, spirit and life. In other words, the denial is made with the life, while the confession is made with the lips. Let both confession and denial be made with the life, and we have, I believe, the spirit of our Lord's teaching in this present passage, in the parable of "Go work in my vineyard" and in common sense and reason. The religion of Jesus throughout is not a religion of form but a religion of fact; the confession of Jesus is not a confession in form but a confession in fact, and such a confession alone is acceptable to our Lord.

Yet the value and necessity of an oral profession of Christ has a true basis on which it rests

and on which it should be rightly put. The public confession of his name is not a magic formula by which a man is to be saved, but is the natural acknowledgment of a loving heart. A true man will want to acknowledge his name. A grateful heart will desire to express its gratitude to his Savior. It is the right and reasonable thing for a man to acknowledge that one by whom he is saved and in whom he lives. And as the profession of his name should be made primarily for the sake of the Christ, because it is his due, so likewise sound wisdom shows that it is the best thing for a man to do for his own sake. Jesus in this discourse has shown the fatality and folly of double-mindedness, of a divided life; he has taught the wisdom and strength of singleness of purpose. To come out fairly and squarely and acknowledge that we are on the Lord's side strengthens a man, gives him stability, hedges him with protection, helps him on his way. But still further, that man who believes in Christ, that man who would live the life Christ would have him live, who would be of service to his fellows and the kingdom, must publicly confess his Lord, for his fellows' sake, and for the sake of the kingdom, else refusing to do this little great thing let him cease to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." Reasons enough can be adduced

without resorting to superstition, why a man should publicly and formally acknowledge his Lord and Savior.

Nor is a superstitious practice and a formal pretension living in right relation to Christ, as he teaches his disciples in the twenty-second verse of this chapter. Preaching and wonder-working in his name is not doing his will. Observe the three-fold repetition of the phrase "in thy name," giving the impression of a cabalistic form. No partial, spiritless, formal, heathenish observance of the law will suffice. No literal, heartless keeping of Sabbath days, holy days, doing of pietistic works, is inculcated in his teachings. To say, "I used thy name four hundred times last Sunday, and repeated forty 'Pater Nosters' while passing the church," is not Christ's idea of living a holy life. To such he will say, "Depart from me," because ye are not of me nor in me, nor I truly in you. "Ye have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof."

"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity," signifies that the daily trend of the life is not in accord with the superstitious religion of the moment. "Depart from me," ye that serve me with the little finger and yourselves with the whole hand. Ye that put your bodies into my service and your whole heart and soul into lawlessness. All life

is to be holy and all living is to be sacred, and the leaven of the religion of Christ is to leaven the whole lump of life.

As Jesus explicitly denies the unqualified value of a formal profession of him, so he expressly affirms the unqualified worth of a real and vital profession of him and of his religion. "He that doeth the will of my Father," "EVERY ONE that heareth and doeth these words of mine," are the form in which he teaches his disciples what constitutes a real profession. A vital relation to Christ alone suffices; the theme of the entire sermon is life, life on all its sides, in all its relations; the emphasis is ever laid on the heart and soul life; the constant call throughout the entire discourse is action!—action!! action!!! In these words a warning is given to the people, as in the words of the last section a warning was given to the teachers. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Here he says by their fruits I shall know them. The fruit is the test of Christ's own life—this is to be the test of the lives of those who profess him. This is the import of the parable of The Branch and the Vine. Anything short of walking this way is insufficient; "saying" is contrasted with "doing"; "hearing" is contrasted with "doing"; and only those who do shall be approved. The doer of his will is he that pro-

fesses his name.

The religion of Christ consists in doing the will of, having the spirit of, walking the way of, Christ in all our lives. "What must I do to be saved?" asks man of man, and man answers assent to the Athanasian or to some other creed. "What must I do to be saved?" asks a man of the Christ and he answers to the lawyer, and to the rich young ruler, and to his disciples here, "Hear and do *these* words of mine." In other words, true belief in Christ is not belief alone in the historical Christ but belief in the spiritual Christ. It is not to believe that one called Jesus lived in Palestine two thousand years ago, and there taught a Gospel of gladness, and worked miracles of healing, afterwards dying a violent death on the cross. It is not enough to have known Christ after the flesh even; in this sense the rulers of the temple, the scribes and the Pharisees knew him better than we can ever know him, and yet they received his denunciation and woe because they "did not know him."

To believe Christ is to believe in his way of life, with the belief of a life doing his way. He believes in food who eats it; he believes in water who drinks it; he believes in knowledge who follows it; he believes in Christ who lives him. Plainly can we see that this Christ life manifests

itself in a thousand forms and peoples and nations, who have never known our creed and who have never followed our forms. In other words, "in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him," and the religion of Christ is far broader than many to-day would admit.

The Master concludes this remarkable discourse to his disciples with the use of the figure of the two builders and the two buildings. In this he reveals to his hearers that the right relation to Christ and his teachings assures that one who has it of a true and abiding life. Again the Teacher directs his hearers' attention to the importance of these teachings to their lives, "These words of mine," these words to which you have just listened, are the standard of right living, these point the way to the way of blessedness, to the formation of that character which shall abide. But hearing these words is not enough, the condition of right living is "hearing and doing" them. He teaches at this point what he taught his disciples at a later time, "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them." And then he concludes with a brief reference to the result of living after this manner, and a brief allusion to the result of forsaking the principles here taught. The distributive phrases "every one,"

“not every one” and “liken unto a man,” show us that this opportunity and this obligation is personal and individual. There is no shirking of this responsibility, there is no warrant for commissioning church or saint to do for me that which I only can do for myself. That man who will hear these words, who will heed them, who will follow them is a “wise man,” a man who chooses the better way, and a man who builds to abide. Moreover, a man who takes this for his pattern, these for his principles of life, is a man whose life is safe and who shall endure. His life is rightly founded on a permanent, unchanging base. He rests upon a rock, even the rock Christ Jesus. He is that man who goes to the foundation of things, that man, to use Luke’s phrase, “who digged and went deep.” This is the man who builds upon that foundation to which Paul refers when he says, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”¹ The life of this builder, the house in which he dwells, like all earthly things, must be subjected to the test of time, and tried by the storms of existence. This is the lot of every life, this is the fate of every man — his building shall be tried on every side — the rain shall test it from above, the wind from about, the floods from beneath — but it shall not


¹ I Cor. iii, 11.

fall, and the life that is built on this foundation, and has these principles of the Master Workman built into it, shall abide forever.

The sermon is ended; the curriculum for the training of the disciples is finished; the best material for the construction of a home is furnished.

I am sure that he who hears and heeds these great principles of the religion of Christ, these golden rules of the Life Worth Living, knows the true philosophy of right living, and stands at the center of the unchanging theology. Here are the materials for every builder of a home — the foundation Rock; the beams and stringers of sound principle — the embellishment and adornment of heavenly precept.

Rise then! O Christian workman, appropriate that which God hath given, build the house Beautiful, the habitation Blessed, and the Home which is eternal.



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